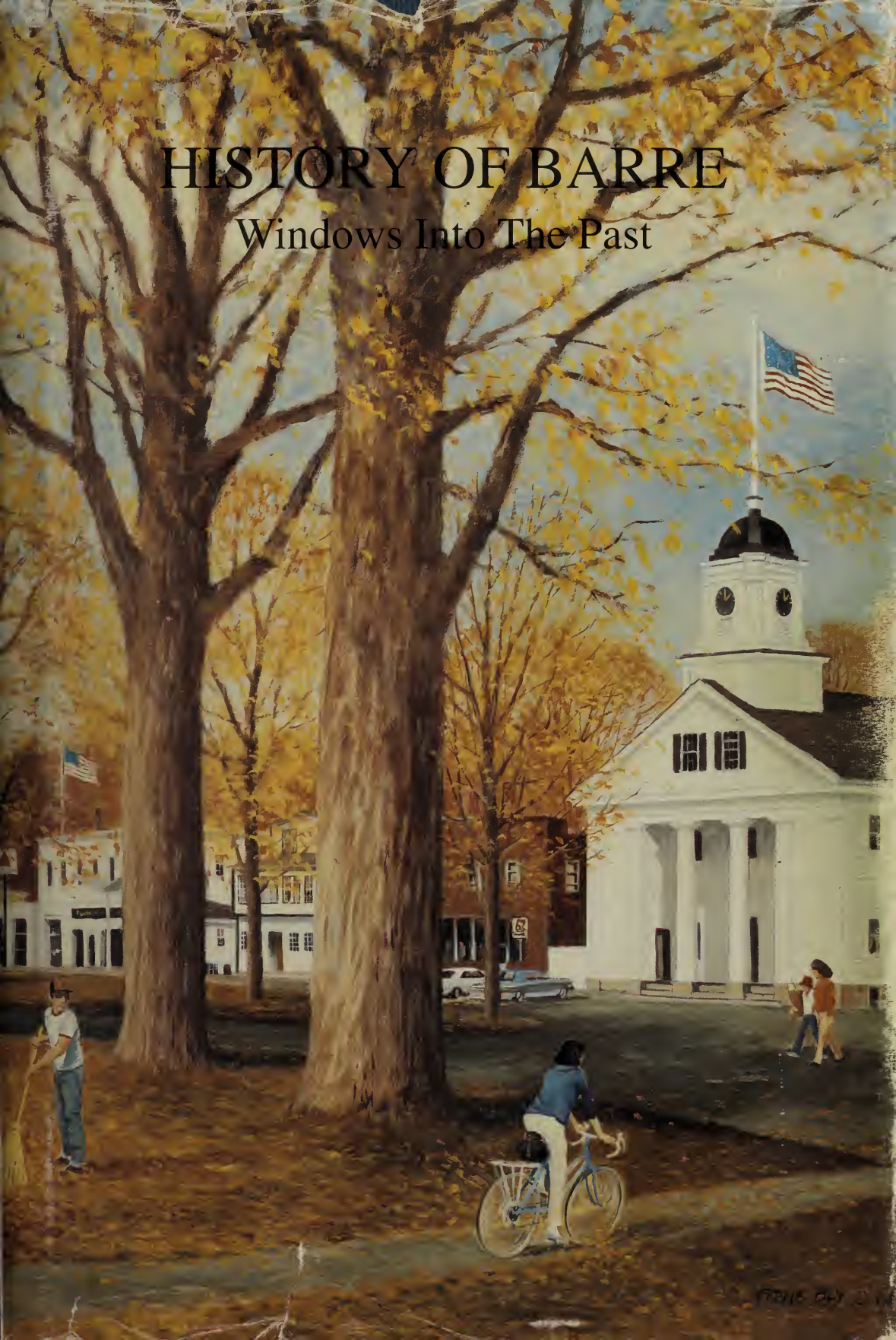


HISTORY OF BARRE

Windows Into The Past



The Barre Common,
by Frank Bly 1986

left to right,
seated on the bench:

Robert Wetmore

Kathleen McKenna

black labrador/setter, "Johnson";

bandstand:

David Onorato.

Patrick Inman and

Becky Pimental;

standing:

James Sullivan,

Wallace and Ettie Glidden;

seated with baby carriage:

Margaret Mertzic and

daughters Pamela,

Marissa and Meg (in the carriage);

raking leaves:

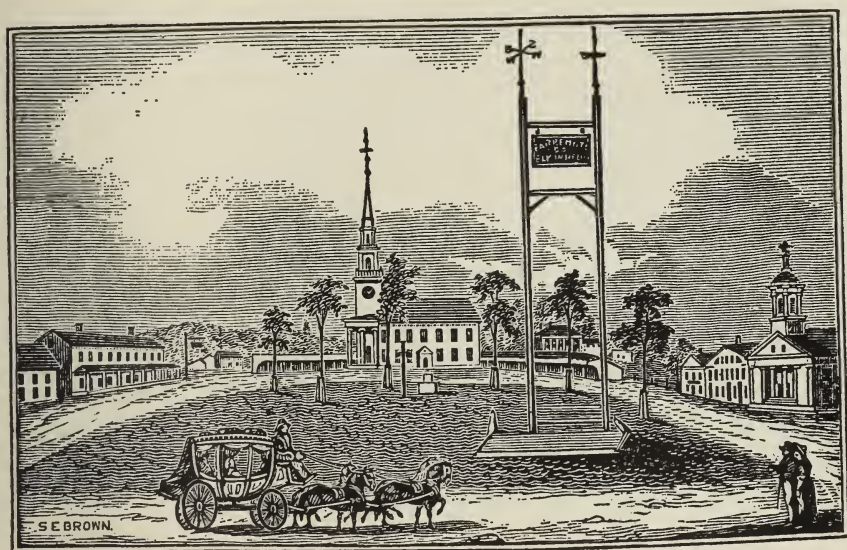
Chris Pacheco;

riding a bicycle:

Kim Staiti;

walking:

Sue and Christopher Higgins



HISTORY OF BARRE



Windows Into The Past

*By Helen Webber Connington
with Albert Clark and Mary Kelley*

*Contributing Citizens and
The Barre Historical Commission*

*Mary Kelley
Dec. 9, 1992*

The Barre Historical Commission
with the support of
Barre Library Association
Barre, Massachusetts,
1992

Dust jacket: Painting of *The Barre Common* 1986
by Frank Bly. Reproduction permission was generously granted by
William McKenna, Healy Bros. Insurance

Printing Production: Harrington & Associates, Print Management

Title Page Photo: Exchange Street late 1890s, Barre

Paper: Weyerhaeuser, 70 lb. Cougar Natural Opaque, Vellum Finish

Typeface: Times Roman

© 1992 Barre Historical Commission. All rights reserved
Address: West Street, Barre, Massachusetts 01005

Printed in the United States of America



This book began as a series of talks given by Helen Connington, primarily to the Barre Historical Society.

In an effort to publish a history of Barre, the Historical Commission, in 1978, hired a researcher/writer with CETA Funds. Unfortunately, with funding for only one year, the manuscript consisted of three chapters and three boxes of 5" X 8" file cards of notes on subjects such as business, religion and schools. With Helen's original manuscript and resource material the Historical Commission and various volunteers worked 13 years to expand, rewrite and edit the work to its present form.

Helen Connington
Barre Historical Commission



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Boston Public Library

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I. EARLY HISTORY

Early Beginnings: Purchase from Indians to 1776	1
Early Roads and Paths	6
Role of the River	16
Barre Namesakes	19

II. VILLAGES

Center Village	23
Massasoit House	
Naguag House	
Hotel Barre	
Town House	
Library	
Bandstands	
Barre Plains	61
East Barre Falls	69
Coldbrook	72
South Barre	74
“Bogue”	78
Rice Village	79
Prince River (Heald/Ryder/Mill Village)	84
Four Corners	91

III. TRADE, INDUSTRY, and BUSINESS

Man Who Tills the Soil	103
The Hat Industry	112
Tradin’	115
Chattel Mortgage	122
Powder Mills	129
Clark’s Mills, Smithville or White Valley	134
Silk Raising	138
Barre Publications	139
Railroads	144

IV. CHURCHES

First Parish to 1833	153
First Parish or Unitarian Church	159
Baptist Church	161
Universalist Church	165

Evangelical Congregational Church	167
Methodist Church	170
Christ Episcopal Church	172
Barre Plains Union Chapel	175
St. Joseph's Church	177
St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church	180
New Life Christian Church	183

V. SCHOOLS

Early Schools	185
Normal School	192
Dr. Brown's Institution	195
Secondary Schools	198
Center School	205
A One Room School	209
High Plains School	213
Stetson	215
Ruggles Lane School	218
Quabbin Regional School District	219

VI. LANDMARKS

Town Pound	225
Burial Yards and Markers	226
Rockingstone Park	242
Felton Field	243
Cook's Canyon	246
Quabbin Project	249

VII. HISTORICAL SKETCHES

Warned Out	255
The Winslows: Good and Not	258
A Most Useful Citizen	261
The Pantalette Doll	263
Quork Walker	265
Naramore Tragedy	268
Stagecoach Era	271

VIII. MILITARY HISTORY 275

RESOURCE MATERIALS 283

INDEX 285

Dedication



With appreciation, this book is dedicated to the memory of

❧ Helen Webber Connington ❧

who enthusiastically devoted her energies and half of her lifetime
to the study and preservation of Barre History.

Our town has been bettered by her presence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Barre Historical Commission would like to thank all the individuals who helped in the production of the History of Barre book. It would be difficult to measure each persons gifts and talents, but without each individuals generous contribution this book would never have become a reality. With extra special thanks to:

Phyllis Anderson	Victoria Hopkins
Alice Allen	Jane Kettell
Robert H. Allen*	Victoria King
John Bentley	Mary Kelley
Frank Bly	Eugene Kennedy
Lester Boyer	Rosemary Lamacchia
Steven Brewer	Mark LaCroix
Gabrielle Carroll	Timothy Mara
Rebecca Chickering	William McKenna
John Cirelli	Alice McQueston
Albert Clark	Lois Mortell
Marilyn Collins	William Neylon
Charles Connington	Timothy O'Connor
Helen Webber Connington*	Harold Patterson
Verna Wine Connington	Anita Rich*
Merritt Cutting	John Scott
Claire Dempsey	Donald Smith
Michael DiRuzza	Lori Stelmokas
Norma DiRuzza	Audrey Stevens
Sarah Dyer	James Sullivan
Linda Eiben	Howard Thompson*
Margaret Frost	Kris Tomlinson
Mildred Gallery	Corridon Trask
Carol Gariepy	Matthew Trifilo
Gerard Gariepy	Peter Trifilo
Jinx Hastings	Barbara Wells
Grace Hester*	Madeline Willey

The Barre Gazette
The Barre Historical Society
The Barre Library Association
Harrington & Associates
Our Families and Friends

* Deceased



1794 Map of Barre from the Massachusetts Archives

EARLY HISTORY



PURCHASE FROM INDIANS TO 1776

The idea of an adventuring family pushing into virgin territory to clear a plot of land and stake a claim to the area is exciting. That theory has somehow become a part of the common concept of our history. Rarely did the process occur in this manner, and practically never did it occur in New England.

There was no “free” land here. The title to all the land which eventually became Barre was reserved to future ownership of a particular group. On December 22, 1686 an indenture was made between a group of five Indians: “Joseph Trask alias Paagushen of Pennicooke, Job alias Pompomamy of Natick, Simon Piticum alias Wananacompon of Wamisick, Sosowannow of Natick, James Wiser alias Qualapunit of Natick dwelling in His Majesty’s territory in America” and the following group of men: Henry Willard, Joseph Rowlandson, Joseph Foster, Benjamin Willard, and Cyprian Stevens... in consideration of “twenty-three pounds in hand paid Indians...a certain tract of land containing twelve miles square.” This was signed on March 15, 1687. This tract of land included what is now the towns of Rutland, Oakham, Hubbardston, Barre, and parts of Princeton and Paxton.

A prerequisite to actual ownership was a grant from the King, as the title of the Crown to these lands was “absolute, subject only to the Indian right of occupancy.” The Crown could extinguish this right at will. It granted certain lands, within certain defined limits, and through its legal power to “companies or proprietors, who became the founders of the towns.” With the King’s grant and the arrangements consummated with the Indians, the men so named became the proprietors of all this land. Only those who made financial arrangements with these proprietors could settle anywhere in the area.

Proprietors were usually influential men of means. In a few instances, large grants were made to individuals as a reward for outstanding service, either military or civil, or simply to favorites of the Crown.

Among the original proprietors of this large grant were the two Willards who were sons of Major Simon Willard of Concord, later of

Lancaster, and Cyprian Stevens who was his son-in-law and had married Mary Willard.

Simon Willard, the magistrate, and Edmund Rice of Sudbury acted as arbitrators in problems arising in the Lancaster settlement. Simon Willard married three times and sired many children, and it is not surprising that the Willard heirs' names appear as claimants to many tracts of land in the area.

Many of the proprietors owned lots or tracts in various proprietaries. When the opportunity arose, they would sell parcels of these lands to individuals. The new owner, upon approval of the rest of the proprietors and upon payment of the tax assessed for improvements in the district, would then gain a voice in the management of the district's affairs. The proprietors divided the lands "among the settlers who participated in the grant or sold the parcels for the common profit of all the original grantees." Careful records of these transactions were kept in books which were called Proprietor Records by an appointed clerk.

The lands could become a district or town when requirements proposed by the legislature were met. The legislature, in the case of Massachusetts called the Great and General Court, had total authority in determining the rules and regulations to be met to achieve the status of district and then town.

The two volumes of the *Proprietor Records* of Rutland are now in the possession of the town of Princeton. One volume was a gift of Mrs. Edwin Woods of Barre, and the other volume a gift from the Honorable Charles T. Russell of Cambridge who was a historian of Princeton about 1886.

These books contain copies of the original deed of Rutland, "the name in general being Naquag" as recorded April 14, 1714 in Middlesex County Book 16, page 511, which answered to the "petition of the sons and grandsons of Major Simon Willard of Lancaster, deceased and others for confirmation of their title to a certain tract of land, purchased of several Indians," and further:

"...ordered that the land within mentioned be confirmed to the children of Simon Willard or their legal representatives...provided that within seven years time there be sixty families settled thereon, and sufficient lands reserved for the use of a gospel ministry and school and that this grant shall not encroach upon any former grant or grants, nor exceed the quantity of twelve miles square. The town to be called Rutland and to lye in the County of Middlesex."

At the first meeting of the proprietary held on April 14, 1714, Samuel Wright of Sudbury was chosen clerk and duly sworn to office. It

was voted that the Clerk was to “use the most speedy method to obtain signatures of the rest of Major Willard’s children and heirs that have not signed the deed of association, to come and sign or empower some other person to do it for them. Five of the proprietors were chosen as a committee to oversee the planning of said town, to the establishment of inhabitants there, to report to the proprietors the most convenient place for settling a township, and the best methods for encouraging inhabitants to settle in said town.”

Several other articles were voted and accepted which were relative to the six mile square grant of Rutland proper. The names of the original proprietors and their shares were listed.

The proprietors were successful in attracting settlers. In 1722 Rutland was granted township and attention was then focused on surveying and drawing up plans for the tracts in the east, west and north sections. Joseph Wilder and Captain Jonas Houghton, both of Lancaster, were dispatched to survey and renew the lines of the grant.

“On November 17, 1733 it was voted to divide equally the north half of the township into two equal parts and that the proprietors proceed to divide the northwest district of the township into lots with one lot designated for the first minister ordained there and another lot for the school, forever and that sixty-six other lots of good land of fifty acres each, be laid out for home lots. When the sixty-six lots of fifty acres each had been set off, the remainder was divided into “thirty-three great farms of five hundred acres each, to be drawn for by the proprietors at a convenient time.”

In this same Article, it stated that “convenient highways be laid out and that a fair and regular plat of this western part of the north half be delivered in as soon as may be.” A tax of ten pounds was levied on each share for the purpose of defraying the costs of the proprietary. Henry Lee applied for the position as surveyor to carry out the vote of 1733. The proprietary rejected Lee and chose Samuel Willard, descendant of the original proprietor, to perform the above duties, and Henry Lee was to assist. Willard was empowered to “lay out and clear a road from the line of Rutland to the center of the Northwest Quarter of Rutland, providing the charge was not above ten to twelve pounds.” Plats were drawn for this northwest section. Lots were selected on July 4, 1734 and recorded in the *Proprietor’s Book*.

The *Proprietors’ Records* of November 1733 show that the directions were given to “find and pitch a spot for settling the Meeting House as near the center of the western half.” Land was reserved for the gospel or ministry at their meeting on August 21, 1734. Lot #2 was drawn by

Major Willard, but it was returned and “appropriated to the first minister that shall be ordained there.” The land consisted of fifty-six acres. Proceeding northwest from High Street, it was east of the #1 School Lot and contained the meadow behind the present Gallery Farm. It extended eastward to include nearly all of what at one time was the farm land of Dr. Brown’s Institution.

At a later meeting it was voted that the “Northwest Quarter was unable to perfect the divisions” but proposed that “a farm of two hundred fifty acres be laid out to the first Orthodox minister ordained and settled there and who would continue in the ministry for seven years or to his death.” This farm was labeled “M” on the plan and was the area between the residence of Charles G. Allen, IV and westward across the Prince River to the present Barre Reservoir and consisted “according to a count of two hundred forty-seven acres.” In June 1743 it was “voted to pay sixteen pounds old tenor, to John Caldwell to defray charges of a minister’s preaching to the inhabitants of the Northwest Quarter for one month last winter.” In September of the same year “eighty pounds was allowed to the settlers in the northwest quarter for procuring preaching for one year coming, the settlers to choose a committee for that purpose.”

In December of 1745 “sixty pounds, old tenor, was allowed to the inhabitants of the northwest quarter to enable them to have a minister among them for six months.” The following year “sixty pounds was allowed for preaching the gospel among the inhabitants” and it was voted to “tax one penny per acre to cover the above.”

Later it was voted to choose a suitable person to build a sawmill so that it could “supply sufficient number of boards to build a Meeting House and a house for the minister for three pounds, old tenor, per thousand - four pounds being charged the remaining settlers.” Forty-eight pounds old tenor was allowed for the ministry for the period of twelve weeks. The payment was made regularly with the amount increasing to one hundred pounds, old tenor in 1748.

The next year, having settled the required thirty families, a petition for township status was presented to the General Court. This was denied, but permission was granted to become a separate district with all the privileges of a town except a representative to the General Court.

Now the area was officially known, as of April 14, 1749, as the Northwest District of Rutland.

An advertisement was published in the *Boston Gazette* of “a tax of six pence per standard acre of land to be laid for the next five years for erecting a Meeting House, maintaining a minister, and laying out and clearing roads.”

On January 5, 1749 the Proprietary voted “twelve pounds, old tenor, to be paid to John Caldwell, one of the committee for erecting a Meeting

House in the Northwest District and applied toward the erection of same.”

Several years later a petition was presented to the Proprietors by Benjamin Lee “in name and behalf of the Northwest District” requesting that “unappropriated lots and parcels of land not already sold” be withheld from sale for the time being as “an acre of land has to be purchased where the meeting house now stands and would be obliged to purchase more land for roads and highways through house lots and farms where no allowance had previously been made.” The petition also stated that there was a need for “some land for a burial place.”

A warrant, drawn by officials of the district on March 15, 1772 and voted at a meeting in April, contained an article to petition for town status. It was passed unanimously. John Caldwell, Asa Hapgood and Nathan Sparhawk were delegated to present the petition. Records show that on “Wednesday, February 16, 1774, a bill for incorporating Rutland



West Street, Barre, MA

District into a town by the name of Barre was read for the third time and passed to be engrossed.” Yet, one week later on February 23, 1774 upon a motion “it was ordered that the Secretary lay on the table the bill.” One can only assume that the problem was the name. Sir Isaac Barre, a member of the British Parliament and a vocal proponent of the rights of colonists, was not in favor with the royal authorities.

Conditions in Boston were hectic. The colony was on the verge of

open rebellion. The opposition to the British authorities was flagrant. In these circumstances on June 8th the bill to incorporate the Northwest District as a town was read twice and the necessary third time on June 9th.

On the 17th of June, Thomas Gage, who had replaced the reviled royal governor Thomas Hutchinson, dissolved the General Court. Before the members were sent home, several bills were rushed to enactment. Among them was the bill creating a town from the Rutland District to be called Hutchinson.

During the subsequent months, while the problems between the colonies escalated, the residents of the new town had to bear a name that most of them detested.

When the General Court convened at Watertown outside the pale of British authority, John Mason, Nathan Sparhawk, Peter Fessenden, and Andrew Parker were placed on a committee to appeal to the legislators to change the name. They asked that the name be henceforth Wilkes.

John Wilkes was another member of the British parliament who usually spoke and acted on behalf of the colonists. Wilkes and Isaac Barre were much admired in America.

Another town being incorporated in America at this time could not decide which man it preferred to honor, thus Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania was named. The legislatures had to make another choice.

The representatives in Watertown were sympathetic to the plight of the new town to the west. Once again, they stumbled over the chosen name. Many of them knew John Wilkes personally, and although they admired his politics, they abhorred his personal life and character. Thus, when the bill was enacted to change the name on November 17, 1776, the General Court chose to replace the name Hutchinson with the name Barre.

The early records after the proprietary ceased to exist. According to the late Ernest Pratt who spoke before the Historical Society on May 22, 1968, the house of John Caldwell (Town Clerk at the time), situated on Pleasant Street near North Park, burned in 1762. The records were destroyed in the fire. For that reason, the records begin subsequent to 1762.

EARLY ROADS AND PATHS

Before the white man came, trails and paths crisscrossed much of the area. One of those paths was known as the Bay Path. Following an Indian trail westward from Lancaster through Princeton to parts of Barre, it became as important in later years to the settler as it had been earlier to the Native Americans. The settler used it as one of his major highways to move westward into new regions for himself, his family,

and his neighbor.

As early as 1733, allowances were made in the proprietors' plan for every house lot and great farm of the Northwest Quarter of Rutland to have roads which could connect every farm and lot. Although some of these proposed roads were never developed, they were part of the proprietors' plan and designed so that the property owner might go to the mill or meeting house without trespassing on his neighbor's land.

In 1734, Samuel Willard, a proprietor, recognized the need for a road to be built from the settled part of Rutland to the center of the Northwest Quarter. Then, as now, weather and disaster took its toll of bridges and roadways, for in 1737, "a great fire in the woods" destroyed the bridge over the Ware River (at Coldbrook) and arrangements had to be made for the rebuilding of this vital part of the east-west route through the district. Often corduroy roads, made of logs set side by side at right angles to the direction of travel, crossed lowland and swamp, and enabled the traveler to pick his way slowly and carefully over the terrain.

Captain Thomas Wells of Deerfield had reported to the proprietors that he and his associates had cleared a road from Deerfield to the boundary of the Northwest Quarter. He requested that the proprietors have the road cleared through the Northwest Quarter so that the road to Boston might be completed. In 1738, it was "contracted to build a good substantial bridge, passable by horse and cart, over the Ware River near Muddy Brook" (Coldbrook). Several years later Moses How and John Caldwell were hired "to repair the causeway at the Prince Brook and that gravel be laid over the logs to prevent them being carried away by floods."

The next year, John Caldwell was appointed to oversee about six days of work clearing logs and trees that had blown down on the road between the Great Bridge over the Ware River and the Nichewaug line. A penny tax on each acre of land was assessed on property owners to cover the cost of clearing the road from Lancaster to Nichewaug (Petersham).

Four years later in 1746, the proprietors voted Lieutenant James Holden and Nathaniel Davis as a committee to view Moses How's road from New Rutland (Barre) to Nichewaug and also voted to give that committee full "power to act or do all that is proper and necessary related to a highway from the bridge over the Ware River to Nichewaug."

Two years passed and the bridge needed repair again and the proprietors "appointed James Caldwell to put same in good condition." That same year, Messrs. Thomas Taylor, Samuel How, and Abner Lee were appointed as a committee to "select the most convenient road from the Great Bridge to the Nichewaug line."

Most of the early roads followed paths or trails which wound through the countryside to allow the greatest ease to the early traveler.

Later these became accepted routes or roads and at the town meetings, it was often voted "to accept the road as it is now trod."

The great road to Boston, passing through the Northwest Quarter from Nichewaug, was used for many years prior to its official acceptance as a County Road in 1758. Great difficulty must have been encountered in the selection of this east-west route through the district for it was voted to add the names of Captain James Caldwell and William Forbush to the committee "to select the most convenient road from New Rutland to the Nichewaug line."

This road was vital to the settler for prior to 1735 there was no meeting house in the Northwest Quarter, and any political or religious activity was with the mother town of Rutland, which was several miles away.

In 1764, no longer under the proprietor, the Northwest Quarter was under its own rule, moneys were allocated to John Black and William Wilson for 500 feet of plank for the Great Brook Bridge (over the Prince River) and to George Caldwell for 300 feet of plank for the Ware River Bridge, as well as over one hundred pounds voted for the repair of roads and bridges, freed the roads from the proprietor.

As already noted, the earliest records of the town were destroyed in 1762 by fire when the home of its Town Clerk, John Caldwell burned. As a result, most of the available records of the town began the following year. In an attempt to clear up confusion as to ownership of the early roads in 1764, the town voted to "accept roads formerly laid out and any others they think." In March 1765, it was voted to "accept all six rod roads formerly laid out and allowed by the original proprietors for roads in said district."

Many of these early road widths and dimensions are confusing today. Many roads were listed as "wide enough to allow two teams to pass" or the customary width of "two rods in width." The metes and bounds recorded over two hundred years ago make little sense today.

In 1758, the county road was given through Rutland District "as the road is now trod and so thru the District by marked trees." Much of this route exists today and is more commonly known as Old Stage Road (part of Pleasant Street, James Street, and Old Coldbrook or Old Worcester Road to the Ware River in Coldbrook) and is one of the older roads.

In 1769, a road was accepted by the town and recorded as "beginning at an oak tree by the road formerly laid out on Mr. Smith's land, running southerly to a white oak tree" or "about two rods northeasterly of Charles Lee's Back House running southerly on Samuel Lee's till it come to Charles Lee's southeasterly corner and then on Capt. Lee's land by his fence till it comes to his howse and so between this howse and corn hows." Some years later another road was accepted by the town as "beginning at a big stump on the County Road leading from Petersham to Worcester and running to the end of a stonewall on Cap't Black's land."

In 1775 it was petitioned to sell the unused proprietor roads and commons in favor of those more suitable and that the proprietors quit-claim those roads that were laid out but never used. The next year a committee was chosen to assess the unused roads and commons according to the committee's best judgment. In March of the following year, the committee's report was accepted and means were taken to plan for the disposal of those roads and commons at public auction. The money from the sale was to be used for the schools of the district. The original proposed Meeting House Square was west of the present common and was included in the public land sale at that time.

In 1782 it was voted to call in all moneys due the town on notes given to the committee upon the sale of Meeting House Square and the six rod roads. The next year a meeting in August considered the "great damage to the roads and bridges by the late remarkable rain" and so voted the sum of two hundred pounds for their repair. Labor charges were assigned as "three shillings per day for man; one shilling per day for oxen; and to work eight hours per day." By September 1785, the cost had risen to "four shillings per man, two shillings per oxen, six pence for cart, plow or stone boat."

Some of the old unused proprietor roads are still visible. One is off Route 122 east of the present Joseph H. Higgins farmhouse. This dwelling was built prior to the present road which passes between house and barn, and the house was built facing the old unused proprietor road which heads southwestward in the direction of Moose Brook. Another old road is visible northeast of the old Bacon dwelling, now Dumanoski residence, on Williamsville (or Templeton) Road.

Many roads were accepted as the town grew and as often was the case, the petitioner with his team worked off part of his tax by doing road maintenance or by clearing roads of snow during the winter months. Walls were commonly built by the property owner or petitioner as a boundary marker between his property and the town road built "at no expense to the town" as part of the agreement for the road acceptance. A petitioner might even build his own road such as Eliphalet Howe did in 1819 or in 1838 when Willard Broad's street was accepted "at no expense to the town." Fence viewers were called in to view disputed property lines and that appointed body would mediate and determine the responsibility of each property owner. Those official acts were recorded with the Town Clerk.

A 1794 map of Barre shows many county roads and includes the nine bridges and eleven mills. As previously mentioned, the old county road from Boston entered Barre at Coldbrook heading westward by way of Old Coldbrook Road, James Street, part of Pleasant Street, Old Stage Road, and on to Petersham. The Templeton Road followed School Street, part of the present Williamsville Road, turned off onto the old

Phillipston Road, and to the Hubbardston town line. The North Road to Petersham followed Pleasant Street, to Hawes Hill Road, and on toward the Petersham-Hubbardston Road. The New County Road to New Salem turned westward on the present West Street to Old Dana Road and to the Dana Line. Hardwick Road was by way of South Street. Root Road was across Chamberlain Hill Road to Lane Road and on to the Hardwick line. Numerous town roads connected these county roads and enabled the traveler to bump over the "thank you marms" in the roads which diverted rainwater into ditches on the sides of the road.

Five of the nine bridges were over the Ware River; one at Coldbrook: one below the junction of the Burnshirt and the Ware River at the Covered Bridge site near Riverside Cemetery, one at East Barre Falls, one at Clarks Mills later called White Valley and one at Barre Plains below the junction of the Prince and Ware River. The remaining four bridges were shown over the Great Brook (now the Prince River) at Loring Bridge site near the junction of Loring and South Barre Roads; on the County Road to Boston (Old Coldbrook Road) where the present bridge is now near the sand pit; near Heald Village at the foot of Mechanic Street; and on the county road to Templeton or School Street near the present Charles G. Allen plant.

All roads were not always welcomed by the voters and numerous times those roads to the "factory villages were passed over or voted down." In some instances the county commissioners were called by the disgruntled petitioner, and the town would then be forced to accept the road. In 1837, the Town Clerk's records reported that a judgment was made on a road in the west side of the town that the "town had unreasonably refused approval of said Orren Spooner's Road." The County Commissioners had allowed the road laid out, and so the town was ordered to make the road "passable and safe for horse, cart, team and carriage." Several attempts were made with little success by Benjamin Clark and Captain Bemis to have the town accept roads from "Clark's factory village" by the powder mill to the center of the town. Edward Denny tried several times to have his road approved from his village of Dennyville (now South Barre) to the center. It was not until 1848 that Denny Road (now South Barre Road) was accepted "to be completed by September 1849."

In 1847, the town voted to "erect a Patent Bridge and causeway near the house of James Newcomb." They chose, "John Bemis and Wilcut Harwood to close roads to the bridge while it is being repaired." This covered bridge over the Ware River beyond Riverside Cemetery was in existence until March 1936, when the flood and ice floes that year lifted it from the foundation and floated it downstream where it rested for many years until it broke and disintegrated. The old stone abutments are still in place today.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the building of turnpikes became popular. Turnpikes were private toll roads operating under a charter granted by the Great and General Court. Corporations were formed which constructed and maintained these turnpikes as well as collected the tolls for the use of these roads. In 1822, an act of the Legislature established the Barre Turnpike Association. The incorporators of that association were listed as Seth Lee, Ephraim Wilson, Anson Bates, Nathaniel Houghton, Samuel Lee, and Peter Harwood. The turnpike started at Barre Common under an arch that connected the Town House with a structure known as the Lighthouse. The road ran easterly, a distance of eleven miles, from the common to the Hubbardston line and through the south part of Hubbardston to the Princeton line. Prior to construction of the Turnpike, the road to Hubbardston started at the common, along James Street to the old Buttrick, later Pobst block, across present Route 122 to the old cheese factory or present Mertzic residence, behind the present house at southwest corner of Valley Road and Mechanic street, and on toward Hubbardston. Toll charges for the Barre Turnpike were similar to others in the state at that time:

4 wheel carriage, chaise, and two horses	.25
Each additional horse	.04
Cart, wagon or sled - two horses	.10
Chaise or buggy - one horse	.10
Sleigh and one horse	.06
Man and horse	.04
Cattle or horse driven loose	.01 each
Sheep or swine	.03/dozen

Exemptions were allowed for persons going to church, for men going on military duty, and to the people who habitually used the road on errands.

Toll gates were strategically located along the turnpike and long pikes. The gates were usually placed every ten miles. One of these toll gates was located near the junction of Everett, Hubbardston, and Walnut Hill Roads. According to the late Charles Harwood, the so-called Cut-off Road off Walnut Hill Road which crossed Gilwee Road behind the present Yaglu farm was referred to as the "shun pike" for those who wished to avoid the tolls.

The turnpike flourished for some ten years, but its popularity was being replaced by rails for the Iron Horse. Long tedious trips, severe winter weather, and the increased expenditures for maintenance of the pikes caused the turnpikes to be phased out and become public roads. Barre accepted the road as ordered by the County Commissioners and chose an agent to attend to "turning the turnpike into a county road."

During the period of the turnpikes, Barre had become and remained a "stop-over" for numerous stage lines that passed through the town. As a result, hotels, inns and other services necessary to the traveler thrived. Matthew Walker reported that at one time in Barre nine hotels or inns existed. Stage lines fanned out in all directions from Barre, and in the 1830s for the sum of two dollars, one could take a stage to Boston by way of Hubbardston, Princeton, Sterling, Lancaster, Bolton, Stow, Sudbury, Lincoln, Weston, Waltham, Watertown, and Cambridgeport. One could return the following day starting at 8 o'clock in the morning instead of the usual starting time of 5 o'clock a.m. Boston. This trip could be made three times weekly. Stages also met trains at Worcester where they delivered and picked up mail three times weekly. Stages



Ginery Twichell

connected at Worcester with other stage lines for other parts of New England. Ginery Twichell (1811-1883) was one of the more colorful stage line operators and drivers of his day. He advertised in the *Barre Gazette* in 1836 that his stage would "connect with other stages after dining at Barre." Reports show that Ginery Twichell, "with a bagful of mail on his back, put on snowshoes and walked seventeen miles from

Worcester to Coldbrook in five hours, in a blinding snowstorm." Twichell operated a Worcester to Athol stage line through Barre which connected with Greenfield, Keene, and Brattleboro where he operated branch lines as well.

One of these old Concord Coaches is still in existence and is owned by the local Historical Society. The last appearance of the stage to the public was in the 1974 Bicentennial Parade when it was drawn by two well- matched, heavy teams of roan horses.

As early as 1814, an agent was selected by the town for obtaining a road from Rutland to Worcester through Paxton. The idea seemed to ferment for several years and apparently produced little attention for on a receipt of payment in 1818 the term on the reverse side of the receipt was written "the Folly Road." It was not until the mid-1830s that the new County Road from Barre Common came into being. In 1837 a committee was selected to "let out the road from Barre Common to the Powder Mill, plus bridge and causeway near Coldbrook Village agreeable to the County Commissioners." Matthew Walker wrote that prior to the time of the new County Road, Summer Street was merely a dirt lane to the first few houses, the first residence of that road being that of Dr. Russell owned by Florence McKinlay. Extension of the old lane to the foot of Summer Street was referred to in May of 1837 as "at the east end of the new County Road."

Storms of ice, wind, and floods proved expensive to the town for road maintenance and moneys allocated for them were constantly being increased over the years. As new farms and dwellings were made, new roads were being petitioned, and new roads were in demand. Roads were needed for the many small and busy industries which thrived along the



Birds eye view of Barre

ivers and streams of Barre.

In March 1863, an agent was chosen to act for the town regarding the "new road from Barre Common to Oakham Town Line near Coldbrook." In November of that year it was petitioned to have the road relocated anew, and boundaries established of the new Worcester Road commencing near the Town Pump leading through Smithville to the Oakham town line as the old boundaries were lost. It was at this time that the new route was made from the bridge over the Prince River near the foot of Summer Street to the Powder Mill. According to Matthew Walker, before this time the dam of Tay's Pond, the area behind the Cranston law office, had been farther downstream. Due to the relocation of the road, the dam was relocated upstream, and a bridge was constructed at the present site. Many of the bridge abutments are still visible today on both the Ware and Prince rivers.

In 1900 the "Small Town Act" was passed and funds from automobile licenses and registrations were made available to assist towns in the construction of secondary roads. Only a few macadam roads were in existence. They were expensive to build and only passed through the centers of towns and cities. Users of dirt roads had not only mud in the springtime but had rough, rutty, dusty roads which made automobile travel often impossible. The early macadam road was about fifteen feet in width with a three foot dirt shoulder on each side for the convenience of horse travel. By 1911 the increase in vehicle travel caused great hardship on the traveler. Towns, counties, and the state were being forced into road building programs of constructing hardtop roads which connected the towns and cities. As late as 1934, Hubbardston Road (Route 62) was reconstructed and hardtopped which allowed traffic to flow from the north county to Hardwick or Ware through Barre, rather than being forced to drive either by way of Athol or Holden. Dangerous curves were eliminated, railroad crossings were graded, and traveling was improved by the reconstruction of Route 62.

In a manuscript in the Historical Society files, written by Edwin Woods, are told stories of the names of some of the streets in and around Barre center. The street now known as Grove Street was then known as Nurse or Leonard Lane. Leonard removed to Rutland District from Northboro and died in Barre in 1775 at the age of 98. At the time of death, he was referred to as Lieut. Moses Leonard. This lane led to a grove of oak trees which was a popular picnic spot in the early 1800s. In the 1870s, the property changed hands, and the former owner suggested that the name be changed to Grove Street.

Newton Street did not appear on the map prior to 1860. In 1864 the townspeople voted to "accept the new street passing the house of Mrs. Emory Newton." Edwin Woods wrote that many of the streets in and around the common were given their names by his mother. In 1855 the

Philadelphia map maker, Richard Clark designed the large wall map of Barre and names were given to the streets. The map included marginal lithograph pictures of the residences of the subscribers of the map as well as the lithographs of the Town Hall, Orthodox Church, Unitarian Church, and the mills at Smithville. Woods wrote that the names of Park, Winter, School, West, Mechanic, South, and Summer Streets were selected because of his mother's fondness for the city of Boston, and that she had no idea that the fancy names would replace the old, more familiar names of the town.

The old county or Rutland road, one of the earliest roads, was named James Street for Eleazar James. He was a prominent attorney who resided at the head of James Street in the early 1800s in a residence which was later moved to Kendall Street but had stood where the present Richard Gariepy residence is located.

Broad Street, accepted by the town in 1838, was named for Willard Broad who resided on that street. He was a civic-minded citizen of the town and presented the street to the town at no expense.



Spring flood of 1936

The flood of 1936 and the September 1938 hurricane and accompanying flood wrought disaster on the roads and bridges along the rivers and streams. The high winds in 1938 devastated parks, woodlands and forests as well. Numerous old stone culverts that had withstood the ravages of former disasters fell under the pressures of the waters of these two storms. Nearly every bridge and highway was either damaged or

destroyed isolating the town for several days while temporary bridges and causeways were constructed.

As late as 1974, in an attempt to protect many of the old roads of the town and preserve them in their simple and charming setting, the town adopted the Scenic Roads Act. Sixty-two roads were designated as Scenic Roads of the town.

THE ROLE OF THE RIVER

The natural entrance to an area is usually by means of the most accessible route. In early times this was by the river. Indian paths and early trails followed rivers wherever possible. Crossings were made where the stream was shallow and had a hard, firm, fordable bottom or at a narrow section where crude log bridges could span the waterway. As settlers opened the new territories, they found that the open grasslands in and around the river valleys were most suitable for immediate use. Cattle could be put to pasture while the settlers were clearing the woodland for homesites. The low lands were also the most fertile lands for crops and provided hay for winter food for the cattle and horses. The early settler, thus, competed with the Indian for ownership of the most productive land.



Caldwell House, Oldest house in Barre, built in the 1730s

In time, one or more settlers would dam a stream or river and harness the water power to turn a wheel for his grist mill, saw mill, or fulling mill. New ideas of making cloth caused many textile mills to be built along the constant flowing rivers. Those mills required many

hands, and the owners would often construct villages around the mill.

The Northwest Quarter was no exception. The early settler in the eastern portion of the town followed the simple paths and roads to the Northwest Quarter. The Caldwell family name was one of those prominent in the early settlement of Worcester and Rutland. James Caldwell had moved westward, according to early historians, prior to the 1730s and became the owner of Great Farm IX. He settled along the Ware River and built what is reputed to have been the first framed house in the Northwest Quarter. Much of the land along the river was connected with the Caldwell family name as dams and saw mills were constructed. The constancy of the water flow was vital to the operation of these mills.

Several small mills had been established at East Barre Falls. More dams and mills were built on the Ware River at an area known as Smithville (White Valley) and at the Powder Mill Site. Farther downstream was another site of a mill just off Nichols Road. Even farther downstream a mill was located at the present South Barre village and at Barre Plains. All of these mills prospered for a time in spite of various set backs.

Due to land gradients, main highways were more easily built following the valleys, branching off to the hill towns, and continuing to the other settlements beyond the valley. The railroads also took the course of least resistance by following the river valleys.

Nature provided the river that encouraged the settlement of the town and furnished power for the industries. In 1868, nature showed another face and dramatically changed the role of the river. A freshet destroyed the dam of the Prince River Reservoir which was above the Charles G.



Charles G. Allen Manufacturing Co., Barre, Circa 1918

Allen plant, and nearly every dam and industry along the Prince River was demolished or damaged. For several years the town was in the process of rebuilding the roads and bridges, but many of these industries and dams were never rebuilt. Only the Charles G. Allen Company which was a farm implement manufacturer and the Luke Knight Mill, survived the wrath of the river..

Opposite the Charles G. Allen plant, on the west side of the Prince River, remains an interesting array of a stone mason's trade in the form of dams, canals, and sluices. According to an earlier historian, these were constructed to increase the flow of water to the Prince River during the summer dry periods. Two sets of dams, cart paths, and stone retaining walls along the old canals are testimonials to one who planned and built it. The mason died before he saw his dream completed.

Traveling up Moose Brook between Old Hardwick Road and Old Dana Road, one sees the remnants of cellar holes that once were a small settlement in the 1730s. The source of Moose Brook is Osgood Pond. The site was the home of saw mills in the early 1800s. A pair of interesting stone dams and wheel pits are still in evidence in the area. One dam was for the pond which supplied the power for the mill. Above it another dam made a reservoir so that the supply of water for the mill could be more constant for a longer period of time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century another drastic change in the role of the rivers occurred. The call for more water for the metropolitan centers in and about Boston sent ominous forebodings of what was to come. Many people refused to believe that the idea of a major reservoir in the area would be developed until the late 1920s when engineers and surveyors began to descend on the farms and villages along the Ware and Swift River Valleys.

The Metropolitan District Commission brought a major change to the area, to the towns, and to the villages along those rivers. Many farms, homesteads, and entire villages were wiped off the map as the Metropolitan District encroached onto the area. Revenue and the mill communities changed, especially those industries above the intake to the MDC tunnel in White Valley. The town of Barre was left with a short portion of the Ware River below the intake which proceeds to South Barre and to the flood plain of Barre Plains. Steam and hydroelectric power replaced the waterwheel and made the use of smaller rivers and streams for power too expensive.

Even the use of the Ware River for recreation was curtailed by the completion of a huge flood control dam and several dikes in 1955.

The rivers have played an important role in the history of the town as they were magnets that attracted colonist, manufacturer, and tourist to the area. The rivers have also played an equal role in Barre remaining a small community. Barre can build and grow only in certain areas, for

her lands in the eastern portion of the town which was drained by the Burnshirt, Conesto and Ware rivers are in the MDC watershed. Rutland Brook flows northward into Petersham from Gaston's Pond and Moccasin Brook joins the Swift River and flows directly into the Quabbin Reservoir. Land around these areas can not be developed. The area is protected for the watershed.

The story of the development of Barre owes its birth to the settlers who received grants from the English Crown. Barre can attribute the development of the commerce to the roads and paths that crossed the terrain. The river contributed to the rise and fall of the industries of the community and in combination with circumstances will keep the town as a small, sheltered burg nestled in some of the most beautiful, protected, forest areas of the state.

BARRE NAMESAKES

Barre, Massachusetts has given the name to two other locations through the migrations of native sons.

The circumstances of the naming of one of these towns has a "believe it or not" quality that was recounted by B. A. Botkin in the *Treasury of New England Folklore*.

According to Botkin, the town of Wildersburg, Vermont, established in 1780 and nestled in a depression just west of the Green Mountains in Central Vermont, found that its name was unpopular with the residents for various reasons. A change was in order and much discussion ensued over a fitting name. In 1793, it was decided to resolve the question at a town meeting. Two men were most vociferous in supporting their individual choices. They were Captain Joseph Thompson, who had moved to Wildersburg from Holden, Massachusetts and Jonathan Sherman who hailed from Barre, Massachusetts.

Why the outcome was not decided by a vote is not recorded, but the populace agreed to a wrestling match between the two advocates of the two different names with the victor gaining the honor of choosing the new name. The contest was staged on a newly planked, hemlock floor. Thompson, the heavier built man, was favored. Sherman was a wiry but strong blacksmith, and he emerged victorious shouting as he staggered to his feet, "There the name is Barre, by God!" Thus, a subsequent petition to that effect was presented to the Vermont legislature and sanctioned that same year.

According to one report, Sherman called on the local physician the day after the match to have a few splinters removed from his anatomy.

Another namesake is located south of Lake Ontario in Orleans County, halfway between Rochester and Buffalo, New York. John Lee,

son of Benjamin Lee and his second wife Esther (Baker) Lee, was born in Barre, Massachusetts on June 25, 1763. He was raised in the Lee Quarter, that section of town in and around the present Wauwinet Road, where the Lee family owned considerable acreage. The name Lee was a prominent one in the early settlement and growth of the town.

John Lee left Barre and headed westward following the natural path that led in that direction. He first went to Batavia, New York, headquarters of the Holland Land Company, a Dutch undertaking which had pur-



THE HON. SIR ISAAC BARRE

Sir Isaac Barre

chased large blocks of land in western New York and Pennsylvania. The company surveyed the land and divided it into parcels for sale. Lee bought a plot of land in the town of Gainsville, NY which was the first sale of land in that particular section.

Shortly, he was joined by two of his sons who helped clear the land and build a log house. The rest of the family was summoned, and it was reported that thirteen Lees lived in that log cabin.

The Honorable John Lee was appointed a judge of the court of Common Pleas. When a new town was set apart from a section of Gainsville on March 6, 1818, he was allowed to name it on behalf of his native town of Barre, Massachusetts. He died in 1823. The farm was divided between his two sons.

Barre, New York, with its villages of East Barre, Barre Center, and West Barre, is an agricultural community. When it observed its sesquicentennial in 1965, several people from Barre, Massachusetts attended the celebration. In return, Barre, NY sent a representative group to the Bicentennial Celebration in Barre in 1974.

The name Barre has traveled from England to Massachusetts, thence to Vermont and to New York through the sons of Barre. It is a tribute to a small town nestled in the Quabbin District and located in the center of the state.



Barre Historical Society and The Massasoit House



Barre Wool Bridge, 1938 Hurricane

VILLAGES



CENTER VILLAGE: A PLACE OF COMMERCE ON THE COMMON

It is not difficult to visualize the Center Village during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The Center Village was truly the center of most of the activities in town. The activity, that was generated by the people hurrying along paths that crisscrossed the common, paints a picture reminiscent of "An American Town."

The meeting house stood at the head of the common land and was the focal point of the village. This house was the center of the spiritual well-being of the community and the seat of the local government. After the meeting house was completed, it was only natural that men with ambition would commence to establish businesses where their local governmental decisions were to be made.

Our records do not reveal the names of the earliest merchants, but we are aware of four men who were very successful early in the nineteenth century, Benjamin Clark, Harding P. Woods, Spencer Field and Charles Lee.

Shortly after 1815 Benjamin Clark moved his store from Barre Plains to the Kilner house on the corner of Common Street and Grove Street. Part of this building still exists as it was moved, near the end of the century, to a lot south of the Methodist Church where it has been considerably altered. Clark was successful but became interested in starting a woolen mill on the Ware River in the area to become Smithville. He sold his store in the center to Field and Jackson around 1832 or 1833. Field soon left the partnership. Samuel S. Jackson was to become the factor in a business that was to continue only a few years. In 1835 Jackson was partnered with Henry Robinson. Their firm shared the Kilner house with its owner, who was a tailor by the name of Frederick Kilner. When the business expanded to Jackson, Feeney, and Company, the firm moved to a new site on the northeast corner of School and Broad Streets. Two years later they moved across the street to the southeast corner but went out of business by 1840.

Another merchant who left success behind in Barre Plains to try for a fortune in the center was Harding Penniman Woods. His first store

was in a building where the Barre Savings Bank now stands. Soon thereafter former partners Moses Kendall and Ezra Baker decided to go separate ways. Kendall moved his goods into the "Old Lighthouse" building on the corner of Exchange and Mechanic Streets. Baker opened a store in the Village Hotel. Woods formed a partnership with Charles Lee. They leased Kendall and Baker's former location from Kendall in a building located in front of the present Cumberland Farms Store in the area where the town scales once existed. Charles Lee took a position in a store in Boston. H. P. Woods made a decision that made him a rich man. He purchased a lot on the west side of the common next to the present Historical Society from Dr. Bates in 1827 and built his own store. That same year he married Sally Caldwell, daughter of Major Seth Caldwell, and fathered six sons and three daughters before his wife died in 1839.

Spencer Field, one of the clerks, rose to become a co-partner in Harding P. Woods and Co. The business prospered due to their energetic personalities. Woods was a man of "robust physical constitution," and he personally drove produce to Boston where he would sell it for supplies for the store. Once, at slaughter time, young Harding drove a wagon loaded with pork to Boston three times in one week. Woods advised farmers and their wives on producing and marketing cheese to optimize their profits as well as his own. Edwin Woods records that Barre farms produced enough to fill twenty-six wagons in a week. From May to November, once every two weeks, Woods made the ten hour trip to Boston in a light carriage. He did this for thirty years.

With the emergence of the palm leaf industry, it became necessary for Field to travel to New York for this trade. Fortunately, two of Woods' sons entered the business about this time, and it became known as Woods, Field, and Company. The Company became agents for H. B. Adams of the Worcester Dye House, transporting materials to and from that business for the purpose of custom dyeing. Harding Woods retired in 1854 after fifty years of business. He died in 1866. There can be no doubt of the impact he and his progeny had upon the economics of the town.

Charles Lee, who had served his apprenticeship with Jason Mixter of Hardwick and in 1819 entered a partnership with H.P. Woods, reappeared in Barre, (with backing from his brother Artemas Lee of Templeton), and purchased Benjamin Clark's stock. The firm C. Lee and Company was in business and changed partners often. John W. Bush was an associate for a while, Eugene W. Prouty joined around 1833, and the firm became known as Lee, Prouty and Company. Beside the usual stock, the store carried building supplies which included everything from lime to plaster, to nails, and lumber. There were even featured such exotic food items as oranges.

Artemas Lee and Prouty soon withdrew from the partnership. J.W.

Jenkins, Jr. became the new partner in Lee and Jenkins. This emporium was located near the corner of Summer and Exchange Streets. The post office was in this store for sometime. Around March of 1837 two clerks, Charles Bixby and Lyman E. Sibley, were taken into the firm, and Jenkins assumed the largest share of the new holdings of the company. The name became Jenkins, Lee, and Company. This firm came to a tragic end in January 1840. Charles Lee had traveled to New York to purchase furniture for his recently completed home on the southeast corner of Pleasant and Union Streets. He booked passage on the steamer "Lexington" which burned and sank in Long Island Sound with a total loss of life.

The 1840s saw several changes that characterized the significant growth of the center of the town. In 1840 a new church building was constructed on Common Street by the Universalists which was later used as the Methodist Church and Golden Age Meeting House. In 1849 a new building for the First Parish was dedicated on Broad Street, and the Evangelical Congregationalists completed their church on the north end of the common at almost the same time. This made the old First Parish building expendable, and it was sold to Daniel Bacon, who moved it from the common location to a space near the corner of Broad and School Streets. A second floor was constructed, space made in the basement, and three floors of office and business space became available in the building renamed "The Colonnade."



Smith Block/Beard Chevrolet, Barre, 1920s

Much of the space around the common became business oriented and continued over the next hundred years. Scores of men tried business ventures in each decade in nearly a hundred locations. To emphasize the large scale of activity in the Central Village, an account of some of the business establishments around the common is in order.

The Colonnade in 1850 housed William Cole, a cordwainer, and Warren Wright, a tailor. On the second floor was the office of the *Barre Patriot*, and when the *Patriot* was gone, the *Barre Gazette* under the guidance of J. Henry Goddard was located in the building. The law offices for the two editors, Nathan F. Bryant and P. Emory Aldrich were located on the second floor also. When the Colonnade was destroyed by fire in 1862, it still contained a boot and shoemaker. Samuel Smith was operating a general store. Charles Gorham had a jewelry shop. In the basement was located a "saloon," the "Montezuma," owned by T.R. Hinkley. One of the three shaker hood manufacturers located in the building, A.N. Elliott and Company, N.L. Johnson, or Clark and Swan, was considered the source of the disastrous fire.

The Smith Block was built by Samuel Smith around 1864 to replace the Colonnade. Originally the building had three stories with a mansard roof and considerable space in the basement. For a period of time it boasted a porch on the Broad Street side with three doors on this side and two basement entrances at the southern side. A large pyramidal skylight and four chimneys graced the roof. It housed a number of different businesses in the nineteenth century. For a while an Oyster Saloon occupied the north side. A shaker hood manufacturer was on this location. There was an ice cream parlor in the basement, a photographer had his studios on the top floor, and the *Barre Gazette* home was in the new building. This brick building, set near the site of the destroyed Colonnade, was eventually remodeled into a car showroom which for many years housed Beard Motors and later the Varnot Company.

Just south of the Colonnade was a building erected by Jackson, Feeney and Company in 1839. This was moved to the opposite side of Templeton Road (School Street) after a few years. It held at various times hatters and cordwainers. Sometime around 1850, it became the location of the "Protective Union Store," familiarly referred to as the "Union Store" for the next decade. In the 1850s Dr. Asa Howland opened a dentist office in this building which was to be the site for dentists over much of the next 130 years. The downstairs was the location of a stationers, a jewelers, and drug stores. Today it houses offices and apartments.

The brick block next to the Town House was built around the same year as that public building, by Charles Kimball and Albert Alden and originally had a third floor. Kimball moved in during April 1839 operating a grocery store. Alden moved his bookstore to the second floor.

Caldwell and Putnum opened a general store on the other side of the ground floor in 1840 carrying dry goods, boots and shoes, glassware, palm leaf products, and stationery. Putnum was soon replaced by another Caldwell, so that the brothers Charles and Seth Caldwell were proprietors for about five years. For a short time this store was owned by A.C. Nichols and Dr. Seneca Carter, and it became known as the "Cheap Cash Store." It featured an extensive drug counter and clothing. Daniel Cummings had a jewelry shop in the building from 1848 which resulted in a large replica of a watch being mounted on the building just under the eaves facing toward the common, and another on the corner post of the front porch. A dressmaker's shop run by the Misses Alexander and Wright constantly advertised for seamstresses. H.T. Brooks, a photographer, also had his quarters here.



Corner of School Street and Exchange Street, Barre

Around 1855 Elam B. Shattuck took over the dry goods business in the block and soon purchased the whole property, thus, giving his name permanently to the building. Hiram Wadsworth, who ran a store in the north side of the building, entered a new field when he became the agent for the Singer Letter "A" family sewing machine. This building housed grocery stores and hardware stores. For quite a few years the Masons held their meetings upstairs. Now the upper floors have been converted into apartments. A videotape rental store and a bicycle shop grace the

ground level.

The long block between Mechanic Street and Summer Street is an amalgamation of several structures. We are not certain of the construction dates of any of the parts. A single narrow building stood at the northern extremity of the block and early in the nineteenth century was known as Kendall's Lighthouse, because of the long pole that extended out over the roadway and from which a light was suspended to announce the arrival of the stage coach. Moses Kendall was proprietor of a general store in this building. In the 1840s this building housed Leander Eaton's jewelry store, as he advertised his location as being "opposite the town house." John Felton had a small clothing and stationery store, while for many years the *Barre Patriot* was located upstairs. Notable among the long term tenants of this building was the post office from 1837 to 1957.



Lighthouse Block

Charles Lee erected a similar building adjacent to the Lighthouse for the use of Dr. Joseph N. Bates as an apothecary shop. After the brief tenancy of a meat market run by Charles Russel and J.B. Wood, John W. Rice took space to produce boots and shoes. Charles Brimblecom, a lawyer, had an office on the second floor for over four decades. For a few years he shared this level with John. F. Partridge, who produced the



Business and an Antique Car Tour, Exchange Street, Barre 1961

new sewed boots and shoes as compared to the earlier pegged type. Many businesses opened and closed over the years, but a succession of lawyers occupied the second floor front, including Matthew Walker. After the mid-twentieth century Stanley Walker did business here on a limited number of days per week. A well-known occupant of the prime location in this building was John Rice, who made "Jack's Popcorn" which was a must for those who attended the band concerts on the common. Jack's Variety Store was continued for many years by Edward Werner and has since been succeeded by a number of different businesses.

Until 1855 the building which had housed the Charles Lee store stood near the middle of the common, some distance to the west of the line formed by the Lighthouse and the adjacent building. In line with these two were the sheds and barns associated with and located behind the Lee store. They held all of the farm produce and exchange items waiting to be transported to Boston. After the death of Lee in 1840, this property became the possession of Jenkins, Gorham, and Company with the exception of a small house that was occupied for some time by a millinery shop which was run by Miss Lavina Partridge in 1846.

In 1855 the considerable undertaking of moving several buildings so that a single uniform block extended from Mechanic Street to Summer Street was accomplished by Jenkins. It is because of this relocated building that the building complex bore his name for over a century. It became a haven for multiple stores and must have rivaled our modern

shopping malls in diversity of items available.

It is certain that Henry J. Shattuck, who had worked with Dr. Joseph N. Bates and learned about medicine at his side, had established a drug store in this building at age 24 and continued for many years. In partnership with his brother N. Lazell Shattuck, who operated a store in Worcester, they expanded their business to become a general store operation and were subletting to a clothing store owned by F.V. Orcutt.

That part of the buildings predominantly fashioned from the old barns, and located closer to the Summer Street end, contained at least one market almost continuously for over a century. From 1866 to the 1870s Elbridge Williams was proprietor of a meat market. He had bought it from Dr. Lawrence Williams, an elder brother of A.G. Williams. He had his slaughter house on Houghton Hill.

In the 1850s Samuel S. Hamilton and Henry Ellsworth also operated a meat market which was short lived. Hamilton, who served in the 53rd Regiment during the Civil War, returned to operate a profitable store in the Jenkins block, growing, and slaughtering his stock at his place on Washburn Road. Highly successful, he was especially proud of his carriage horses which he entered in competition at all the fairs in the area.

In addition to these highly competitive meat markets, the block housed for many years after 1860 a harness shop owned by Edwin and Moses Ames. At the end of the building, toward Summer Street, was an open shed where Baxter Swan sold his memorials or gravestones. Above this was a billiard hall. At various times the block has contained a hardware shop, a jeweler, a barroom, restaurants, a snack shop, a sec-



Nourse Tavern Location, corner of James Street and Summer Street, Barre

ondhand store, and a liquor store. For many years in the last century the second floor of the old Lee store building was occupied by J. Martin Gorham's law office.

On the corner of James Street stood the old Nourse Tavern which had been moved to the site by Lansford Felton about 1839 to be used primarily as a saddler's shop where he also advertised his trade. Harnesses and whips were also sold. This business was soon sold to Jonathan S. White of Greenfield who stocked accouterments such as sleigh bells, horse blankets, cattle cards, and neatsfoot oil. When Walbridge joined White, they expanded their production to trunks. This business continued for a score of years. The old tavern had a second story and also a fairly spacious basement providing ample space for other businesses. Stoves and ploughs were the specialty of John H. Spencer and from his store in the basement of the Felton building were purveyed many with names familiar in the nineteenth century including Plate, Franklin, Parlor and Vermont Parlor. Spencer also stocked dinnerware.

In 1846 Orasmus F. Woods rented basement space for the "Barre Saloon" where townspeople could partake of ice cream, fruity candy, and wedding and birthday cakes. In the south end of the basement level was located the cemetery marble shop of Willard Walker. It is also probable that a small shed building behind Felton's was part of this business. In 1856 the business was owned by G.W. Lilley and Company although Walker remained as agent for many years. Walker's stand was known as the Barre Marble Yard and many stones bearing Walker's name may be found in cemeteries in Barre, New Braintree, Hardwick, Oakham, Petersham, and Spencer.

The upstairs rooms in the Felton building were occupied by businesses including a barber shop. Both Noah Williams and Calvin Willard advertised as being in this location. Willard succeeded Williams. By 1848 Estes Hawes' tailoring establishment was located in Felton's, which was probably on the upper floor. Hawes was the most successful tailor in town, being in business for half a century and building a fine home on Summer Street.

Just down James Street opposite the Naquag's ell stood a building built by Ira Johnson around 1835 for a relative, Levi Johnson, a jeweler. It stood approximately at the site of the Honey Farms Store today. Johnson apparently lived in this building while running his shop, which also stocked music boxes, spectacles, violin strings, and clarinet reeds. Dr. Moules had his office here. Around 1840 on the second floor Lewis Prentiss sold parasols, canes, and musical instruments at the same time. Mary Flint had rooms where she ran a millinery shop, "did" ladies hair, and in 1840 married landlord Levi Johnson. This building at some point became known as the "Packard Block" and eventually was joined to the

Felton structure. The resulting L-shaped block intruded almost out to Summer Street and contained over the years the Baxter Swan's sales office and Charles L. Gorham's shop. Gorham relocated to this spot after the Colonnade fire and changed his line of business to pianos, melodeons, cabinet organs, and Wilcox and Gibbs family sewing machines. Sidney Sibley was a dealer in books, stationery, sold stereopticon viewers, and "fancy" goods. Also located in Felton's building was J. Allan Rice, a boot and shoe salesman, who sold Finkle and Lion sewing machines in competition with Gorham in the same building. One of the more interesting tenants of this building in the later years before its demise was Sam Sing Lee who had a laundry in the basement level many years.

As the buildings designed expressly for business around the common became totally occupied, a number of houses were built in proximity to that commercial area to be used as both domicile and shop. Many others had already been converted to this purpose. A new one was built around 1839 just south of the Johnson-Packard building by a tailor named William H. Hull. This house, which still stands, was used as a home shop for many years. Avery B. and James Babbitt soon opened a blacksmith shop at this Hull house, although the actual smithy stood behind the next house on James Street. They also sold baby carriages and a line of furniture.

Edwin D. Blakely who came to Barre from Baldwinville in 1843, in 1855 took over the Babbitt location, and bought both of the first two houses on James Street. His shop became known as a machine shop where he repaired mowing machines. He also sold Paragon seed plants. The second house was the location for many years of another stone cutting firm. Charles M. and Benjamin H. Kinney operated from this location from an unknown date and were succeeded by William Walker. A good portion of the west side of James Street was occupied by the Naquag House and many sheds, barns and stables that belonged to the hotel. Further down the street near Kendall Street, there was, in 1855, a blacksmith shop operated by William H. Graves. This shop was later moved to a position behind the current Lloyd house. Early in the 1850s near the corner of Kendall Street, Nathaniel Stone, a native of Bakersfield, Vermont, opened a carriage shop. Here he produced sleighs and carriages. By 1870 his shop was at the corner of School and Winter Streets, and Chauncey Loring was established at the Kendall and James Street location where he was noted for his ornamental painting on his carriages, buggies, and express wagons.

On Kendall Street a palm leaf business was operated at the height of that business's growth in the house now occupied by the Bryants and Keenans. Near the southeast corner of Kendall and South Streets was the building used for a tin shop by Thomas White. Around 1832 a block

constructed of brick, believed to be produced locally, was erected on the south side of the common adjacent to the Naquag on the present site of St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Alvah Hathaway built this structure. One of the first occupants was Odin Hubbard, a saddler, who made the usual line of goods associated with his trade of harnesses, trunks, traveling bags, and carriage trimmers. The Felton brothers occupied space here before they purchased and moved the old Nourse Tavern. Charles Blanchard, a tailor, was located in an upstairs room. Eventually in 1835, the room was the place of business of a block barber, William Ebet, who had married Rosanna Walker, daughter of Quentin Walker, in 1800. James Riddle, another tailor, was later in business in this block and for a while provided strong competition for Estes Hawes who was located not too many doors away. In 1858 the building was sold to the Roman Catholic Diocese and the building was remodeled into a church by the St. Joseph's parish.



View of South Street, from the South end of The Barre Common

On South Street was Grover Spooner's house, now an apartment house. Slightly to the south of his house was located his cabinet shop. Just next door to the north was a building used for many years as a carriage shop which was first owned by Edward Woods and later by Henry Hervey. Each proprietor leased space to an artisan who specialized in painting, varnishing, and gilding. With Woods was Henry Williams and associated with Hervey was Dexter Rice, son of Benjamin Rice, who ran

a small scythe shop below Hemenway Pond Road in the northern extremities of the town.

In 1847 just north of this carriage shop the town engine house was built. A very old brick building dating from the eighteenth century was located adjacent to the engine house. It purportedly had been a powder house. In the 1830s a few dwellings and a small building which was Charles Wadsworth's law office were situated between the powder house and the brick Hathaway block.

Turning back to the intersection of South and Common Streets just south of Grover Spooner's was Albert Alden's building where from 1834 to 1839 he operated "The Barre Bookstore." When he moved into another new brick block adjacent to the town hall, Grover Spooner used this building as his undertaking parlor. The next building in a southerly direction was the original printing office of C.D. Thompson. Albert Alden was the engraver for Thompson and upon the latter's death in 1838 Alden took over as owner and publisher of the *Gazette*. This building, which was also utilized as a stationery store where Alden undoubtedly sold some of his well known engravings, fell into disrepair and was razed in 1980.

On the corner of Kendall and South Streets was the establishment of Tilly Mead who was a cabinet maker and undertaker. The first house south of Kendall Street was the property of Thomas White. Part of the complex included the tin shop and a few feet down Kendall Street was a rag shop in the barn connected to the house. In later years another building a few doors along South Street was built to accommodate another tin shop operated by James F. Davis, who had arrived in Barre as an apprentice to Thomas White. Davis eventually changed his trade to become a successful insurance agent. His home and business was in the building which is now the bicycle shop. A short distance further south on the street on the other side of Galloway Brook was the house of Josiah Putnam Howland, built by Thomas "Jenk" Howland, a well-known carpenter. This small house was known as "Goosefeather Lodge" and was torn down in 1971. Josiah built a house adjacent to this in 1835. A pond behind this house had two small mills and a tannery. For much of his life Howland was engaged primarily in the painting of houses.

On the west side of South Street, just below the intersection with Kendall Street, Antrium White had his home and a business in partnership with his brother Thomas. Here they manufactured copper pumps and later added a stove shop. This business eventually was controlled by Thomas. When he sold to his two sons Thomas H. and William H. White, he entered a new career selling and hauling coal. The house nearly opposite Kendall Street was for many years the site of a slaughterhouse. For several years it was the property of Mr. Freeman. He was succeeded by Joshua and Abijah Wood. Abijah soon left and from 1837



Barre Savings Bank, 1910

to 1843 Joshua struggled with the business and advertised it for sale. He formed a partnership with Charles Russell, whose store was located in the Charles Lee building. Northwest of this slaughterhouse and probably in conjunction with it was a tannery located on Galloway Brook run by Asa Clark and subsequently by Edmund Howes Houghton. For some years a small building stood near the present St. Joseph's rectory and



Woods/Williams Block, Common and Grove Streets, 1893



Williams/Simenson Block, Common and Grove Street

was occupied by Seth Holden and subsequently J. Henry Hill, lawyers. There were a few buildings used exclusively as homes. On the present site of the Barre Savings Bank was the home of Luke Houghton who in 1838 built a more pretentious structure across south common. Upon his moving, M.R. Williams and A.R. Lyons opened a furniture business in the building with Williams staying for several years. Williams advertised brass and wooden clocks, children's wagons, and even constructed the mahogany pulpit for the church next door. This building was later utilized in the palm leaf hat business.

Just to the north was Nathaniel Houghton's house and law office. This later became the property of his daughter and son-in-law Mrs. and Dr. Joseph N. Bates. Frederick Kilner was the owner of the next building to the north and purveyed both ready-made and tailored clothing for men and women from 1831 to 1848. There was also room in this building for a store, as mentioned earlier, that became Jackson, Feeney and Company. This house was moved in 1889 to a lot just beyond the Methodist Church with a square "tower-like" addition altering the original appearance. It still stands today.

On the corner of Leonard (now Grove) and Common Streets was Widow Gilbert's house. An "old structure" in 1820, we know that by 1835 Animadulce Gilbert was set-up in the millinery business and continued until about 1860. This building, commonly called the

Animadulce House, was also moved in 1889 and became incorporated into a house on Grove Street. On the other side of Grove Street was the busy emporium of Harding P. Woods from 1826. A store that carried a myriad of products, it was the forerunner of a chain of establishments in this same location right up to the 1950s. A building that housed several small establishments on the upper floors including the local telephone exchange for many years, it also contained a hall that saw many programs, graduations, Jr. Prom's, plays, and Miss Witts dance recitals. The original building burned in November 1892 when A.G. Williams was storekeeper. Within a year a new store was built known as the Williams Block, with the famous Williams Hall upstairs.

A.G. Williams sold his store, January 1, 1926, to S.I. Simenson just 100 years after the business was originally started by Harding F. Woods. He had himself been in the business there over fifty years.

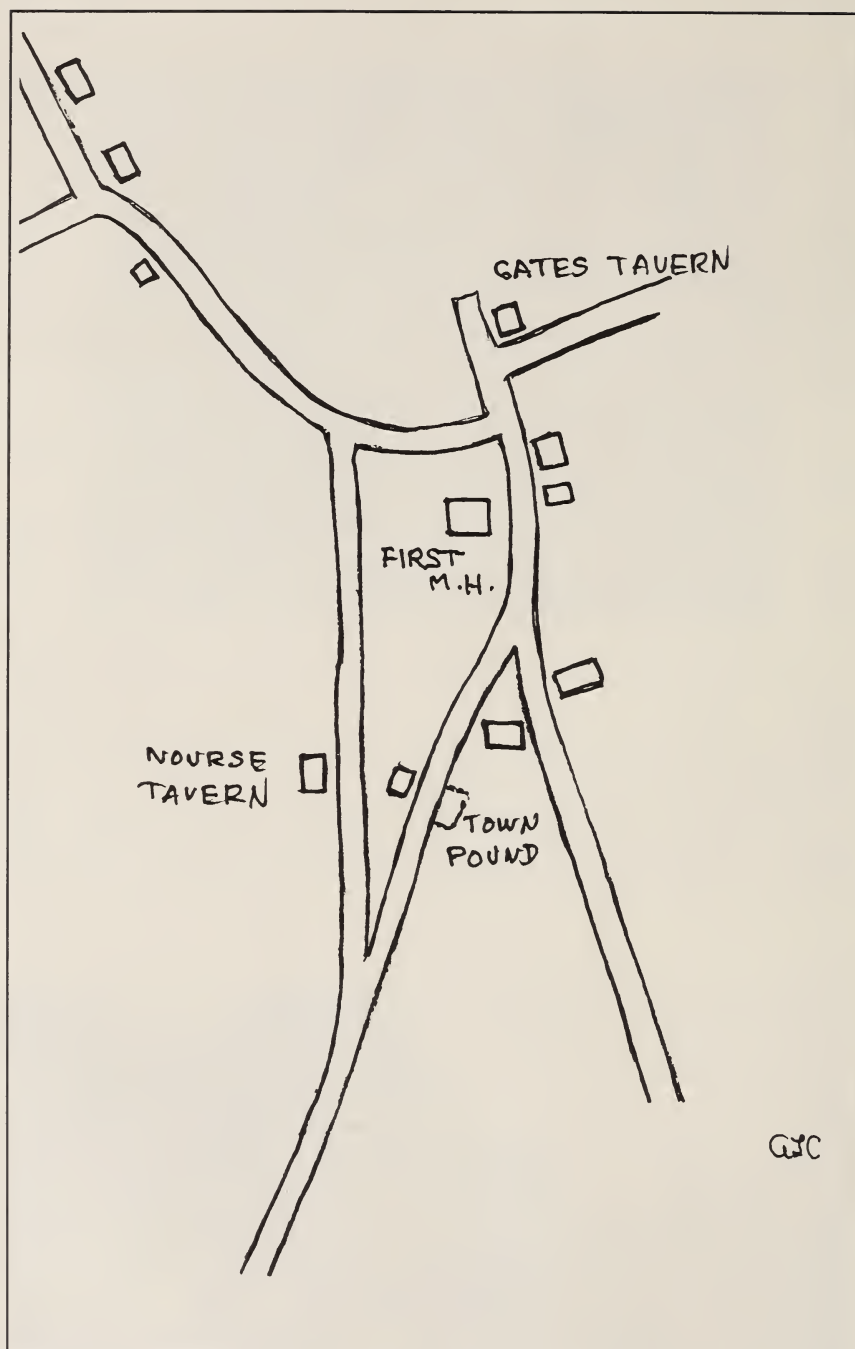
Sigurd Simenson and later his son, Anton, "Tony," along with him, continued the store much as it had been, and events continued to take place in Williams Hall. The grocery store was on the right facing the store, and the dry goods were on the left, the side toward the hotel.

A palm leaf hat shop was removed in 1838 and a beautiful home erected in the place for Spencer Field who was in business with Harding Woods. There was another small structure between Field's spacious home and the Massasoit that contained several businesses over the years including a bakery mentioned earlier.

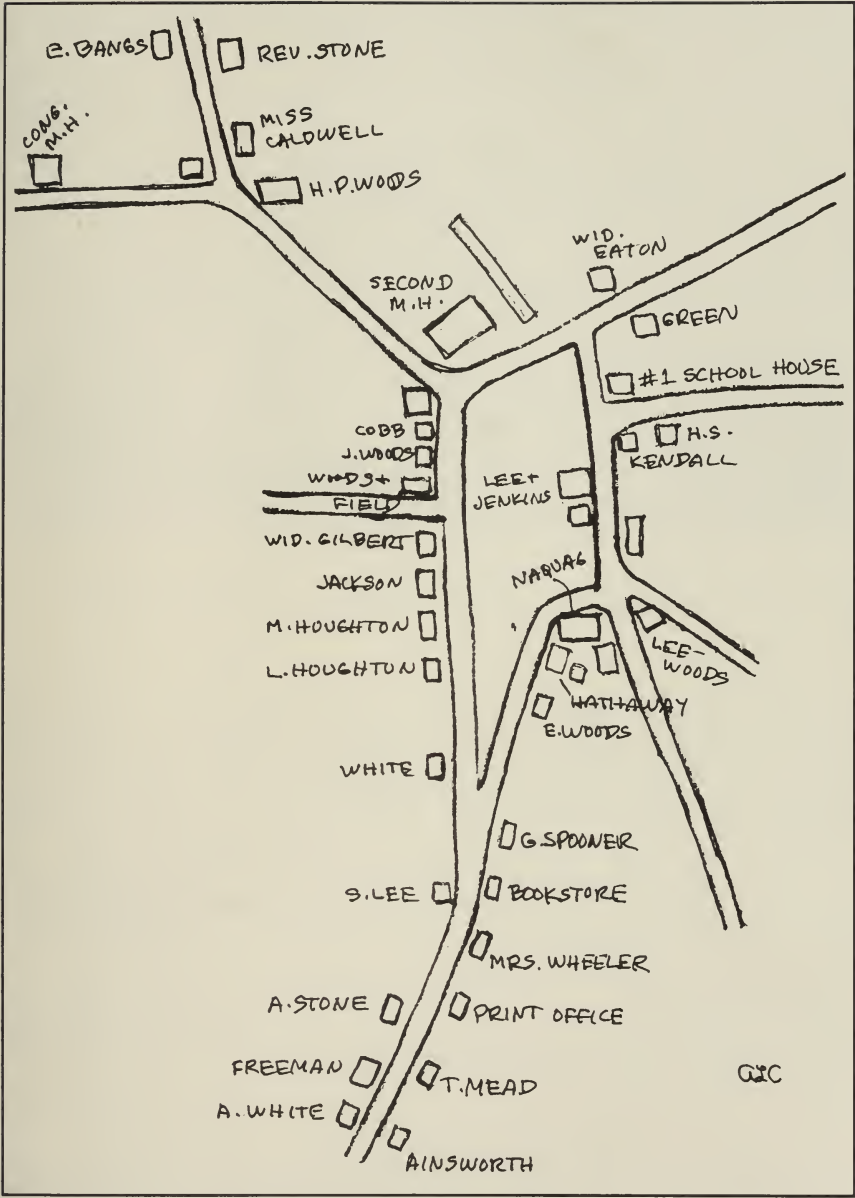
Another area of commercialization was just off the common on West Street. A small stream had been dammed just west of Union Street and a number of small industries flourished. A chain factory was owned by



West Street, Route 122, Barre 1950s



There is no 18th century map of the common area. This is a re-creation to show the approximate location of some of the more important features in 1782.



Recreation of an 1835 Map of the Barre Common



Lithotype Printing Co., 114 Nassau St., New York.

Massasoit House, built 1833, present site of Barre Post Office, photo date circa 1900s

Larkin Smith and a palm leaf splitting factory operated by Sylvester Bothwell existed in the area. Smith's factory became the property of Emory Hastings who made packing boxes for the Barre Boot Company. Hastings converted to steam power. A mattress factory operated by the Woods family utilized waste from the hat industry in this same area.

In the 1830s just west of the meadow pond was a bakery run by John Sanders. Later, almost opposite the row of factories on the south side of West Street was a wagon manufacturing establishment which was run by Henry Rice and then his son Charles Henry Rice.

The common area was a place of great activity and truly a center that attracted many customers. It is easy to see why merchants moved from other locations. It was a prime business location.

MASSASOIT HOUSE

To meet the hostelry needs of the growing village, an establishment was built in 1833 by Seth Holden and Captain Benjamin Felton. It was located at the end of Common Street where the post office now stands. Originally it was opened as a temperance house with Holden as proprietor. The establishment soon changed the policy about beverages to satisfy public sentiment. Around 1840 an addition containing a hall was

built to the rear. As with the Naquag, a succession of owners and proprietors were connected with the Massasoit. Proprietor Sylvanius Twichell was succeeded by Abel Rice. When Rice died in 1850, his sons Horatio and Francis Adams Rice continued with an efficient system. Horatio managed the hotel while his brother worked a successful farm that supplied the hotel with fresh vegetables, mutton, pork and beef.

In April of 1858 the barn on the north side was taken down and a larger stable erected in the back. The livery and an accompanying feed and grain store were run by Abiather Lawrence, earlier associated with the Naquag. The public was so appreciative of the Rice food, that Abel Rice opened a meat market in one room of the downstairs.

Cheney Hamilton leased the hotel in August of 1863. Hamilton, a stage proprietor of the firm of Butler and Hamilton, was successful in getting the Barre Stage and Express office moved from the Naquag. The four horse Barre and Greenfield stage stopped at the hotel. Later, when a railroad was built through Hubbardston, a stage ran to that station.

Two years later the whole property with all buildings was sold for \$4,200 to H.J. Shattuck. He installed J.T. Brooks as proprietor, who was soon joined in the business by his son Benjamin T. Brooks.

A menu from this era is still extant and includes oyster stew, chow-chow relish and pickles, boiled corn beef, oxford ham, beef tongue, rib of beef, spring lamb, pork, turkey, squash, potatoes, stewed tomatoes, peas, and celery. For dessert a choice of mince, apple, pumpkin and squash pies completed with tapioca cream pudding and assorted cakes. Apples, grapes, and oranges were also served. Either tea or coffee could complete the meal. For many years the house next door was occupied by Edmund Cobb, a baker, whose products were conveniently accessible for a succession of proprietors.

In 1866 the barns on the north side were finally removed and a street called Massasoit Street was installed between the present location of the post office and library.

Over the latter part of the century Rufus B. Holden and George A. Bemis were successfully in charge of the Massasoit. The ownership during this proprietorship seems to have been transferred to a Mr. Cummings who was instrumental in several changes. Those changes included the purchase of an "old hat shop" which was moved to the hotel site and added to the existing building. The building at this time was L-shaped, and because of the additions over the years, the structure had some oddly aligned windows and peculiar stair arrangements. The Express office was housed in the north wing. The front of the building toward Common Street boasted a two level piazza. One story of the piazza dwarfed the huge four, horse coaches of the day. The hall in the rear was used as a ballroom for nearly a century. In the 1900s the ballroom was employed as a basketball court by local youths and as a meet-

ing place for the Barre Boy Scouts.

In the 1870s J.W. Morgan of Springfield did fresco work on some of the interior walls while a Worcester firm papered the rest. Z.A. Morgan painted the exterior. The orchestra area of the hall was redesigned. This was accomplished under the direction of Mrs. Martha Cummings, nee Brooks, who purchased the property at auction.

In this era other men associated with the Massasoit were Frank J. Haven, Franklin Green of Newton, Joseph Bouchie of Ware and Frank Dolan of Athol. For the last few years of the existence of the hotel it was operated by Mrs. Charles C. Brown. In May 1928 the building was purchased by Harding Allen and demolished to make an entrance to his home which was behind the hotel property.

The demolition crew found many original parts intact which had been covered by later renovations. Beautiful old wainscoting in the dining room was discovered. Floorboards that were twenty-four to twenty-six inches wide that had been cut in a manner called "double soss" were among the findings. Many old fireplaces were revealed, there were brick ovens for meal preparation found in the cellar, and in the south end a small room was discovered the word "Jail" painted above it. Since the hotel predated the Town Hall, it is probable that this was a holding cell used by the constables before the town jail was built in 1858. In June the stables with room for forty horses were taken down. For a while the Massasoit had also hosted the Brunswick Fox Club after their headquarters in the Plains had burned.

Many stores at various times were located in the Massasoit House. Dr. J.N. Bates utilized the south parlor as an office prior to 1877. Very early in the hotel history, Timothy Adams occupied part of the south end where he made and sold hats. Ebenezer Ripley, an apprentice of Adams, was a native of Barre who married a Salome Smith, a local girl. In 1839 Ripley became the sole owner of the shop. The space he rented must have been fairly extensive as he subleased a portion to Alden B. Smith and later Moses Mandell where shoes were sold. This arrangement seemed to be satisfactory as Ripley and Mandell were succeeded by Garfield and Upham. Later John Dow and James Butler sold the same items respectively. In the south wing was also located a small restaurant and H.J. Shattuck's drugstore. Before Abiather Lawrence managed the stable and grain store, he operated a general store in conjunction with his father-in-law, Asa Hapgood. The Massasoit House was a place of rest, fine food, and shopping.

NAQUAG HOUSE

The Ruggles Tavern briefly became the property of Dr. Anson Bates who had no desire to be an innkeeper, and soon sold it to William

Robinson in 1811. Robinson built a sizable addition fronting the common and added a billiard room. For some period of time Lyman Sibley, town clerk, who lived just a few doors down from the Naquag served as the proprietor. During this time it was called simply the "Village Hotel." Archibald Black succeeded Sibley, and business was good enough to require the acquisition of a second house on James Street to take care of the overflow of visitors.

Alvah Hathaway and Abiather Lawrence also became proprietors of what soon was called the "Barre Hotel." The Barre Hotel became a center for horse trading and arrangements for breeding. In 1824 it is noted that Joseph Robinson, Jr. of Hardwick brought his horse, Golden Farmer, to the tavern grounds for that purpose. The meeting rooms were used as a place for probating estates, auctions, and business matters by day, and intellectual stimulation when in the evenings the Barre Lyceum held informative lectures.

Late in the 1840s, A. and T. A. Rice became owners and promptly renamed the hotel the "Naquag" memorializing the Indian name associated with the original land grant. Repairs were made, new furniture purchased, and advertising employed to attract city dwellers during the summer months. The success of this campaign was prolonged over several decades. In the 1850s manager J. McKnight ordered china imported by C. W. Wiggin of Boston, which would be sufficient to serve 125 people, inscribed with "Naquag House" in a scroll and decorated with a



Naquag House, James Street and Moulton Street, Barre, burned in 1896



Wheeler House, same location as Naquag House

black eagle, olive branches, and arrows.

It became common practice for the owners of the hotel to occasionally lease the establishment and the connected livery stable to a second party which resulted in a long list of names associated with the operation. There was also a constant "bidding war" among establishments to be designated as the stopping place for the stage coaches that traveled both north, south, and eastward through the town and brought the mail.

Hotels of the period usually had a barber shop, and J. McFarland had a barber shop in the Naquag for a time. Addison K. Houghton attempted a general store in the northwest corner in the 1830s. Typical of the annual entertainments was a Christmas supper and ball held on Christmas Day in 1878. Supper was 75 cents and tickets to the hall, where dancing was enjoyed to the accompaniment of Griffins Quadrille Band, were just one dollar.

During the night of March 5, 1896, the wife of proprietor N.L. Shattuck was awakened by a loud crash that seemed to come from the second story of the ell. Mr. Shattuck had just reassured her when a cry of "fire" was heard. Margaret Plunkett, the hotel table girl, had been roused by a "suffocating smell of smoke." Shouting the alarm, she found it impossible to exit through the hallway so she climbed to the roof through a skylight in her room. Mr. Shattuck rushed to rouse his brother and a boarder, Mr. Shaw, both of whom left the burning building by fire ropes. There had been no time to salvage any of their belongings. Shattuck's main concern then became Miss Plunkett. He ran through the second and third floor halls trying to find her, sustaining considerable burns to his face, his hair burned off, his sight impaired, and managed to

escape the building suffering greatly from the effects of smoke inhalation. Meanwhile, Miss Plunkett managed to jump to a nearby tree and reached the ground with several severe cuts and bruises. Shattuck was in a "state of delirium" for several hours but improved rapidly.

The fire had spread and little could be done to save either the building or the barns and sheds. Several times roofs of nearby homes and the Exchange Block burst into flames. Water from the eight hydrants recently installed on the common by the Barre Water Works Company, to replace the wells previously used, was delivered by pumpers and prevented a greater disaster. All the efforts of the fire department and officers of the water works were not enough to save the Catholic Church next to the hotel. The church roof burned and collapsed which completely gutted the interior. Two horses were saved from the hotel barn, but several wagons, various harnesses, and a carved sleigh were all destroyed. A sum of money and papers were preserved by the hotel safe.

Despite the tragic loss and his own injuries, Shattuck announced plans in January of 1897 to rebuild on the same site. These were plans that were never realized.

HOTEL BARRE



Hotel Barre, Common Street, Barre

Often referred to as "The Jewel of Central Massachusetts," Hotel Barre displayed many facets in its more than a century of existence. It also went by several names: Barre Hotel, Hotel Barre, Barre Guest House, Barre Inn, and, in its final years, in the re-creation of its Victorian beginning, Hotel Barre.

In the spring of 1888, prominent men in town got together, obtained a charter, and formed the Barre Hotel Company. There were already two hotels on the common, but this was to be a different kind of hostelry, one that would cater to affluent clientele from the cities who would ride out on the trains, be whisked up from the stations in stagecoaches, and spend a week, a month, or the whole summer in the tranquil country setting.

Some local entrepreneurs wanted the hotel to be located on Houghton Hill or Allen Hill, high spots west of the center. Storekeeper A.G. Williams had another idea. He thought a good place for the hotel would be the lot near his store once the old buildings were removed.

Dr. Charles G. Allen was first president of Barre Hotel Company. His son, J. Harding Allen, just 20 at the time, bought the old buildings at auction and moved the cottage or Animadulce house to Grove Street and the two-story Kilner house south on Common Street where, a square tower and piazzas added, it was made into "two commodious tenements."

The architect for the hotel was Harry Woods of Boston, son of wealthy financier Henry Woods, born in Barre and its benefactor, eventually donating the library, the high school, and the portrait of Isaac Barre, a copy of the Gilbert Stuart painting.

The hotel was of Italian villa design, two three-story rectangular sections converging at an octagonal four-story tower. There were wrap-around piazzas and fancy filigree ornamentation. The structure was often likened to a luxury riverboat, at anchor on the west side of the common.

Stocks were sold for a capital investment of \$25,000. at \$100 a share. William Fullam and Sons of North Brookfield were chosen as contractor and by fall twelve carpenters were working to get the building closed in and the tin roof on before the first snows of winter.

The company leased rights from J.O. Cook for water from a spring on Houghton Hill. A well and aqueduct were constructed and tanks installed on the second and third floors of the hotel to which water was pumped. By December water was running into the new building with pressure enough to raise the water several feet above the new roof. The company also voted to pipe the house for gas and to put in apparatus for heating it by steam.

On June 12, 1889, the new hotel opened with tickets at \$1.00 a plate. Dinner was served to 250, including members of the Barre Brass Band, which furnished choice music and later gave a concert from the band-

stand on the common. Harry Smith, a veteran hotel man from Malden, was manager that first year, leaving the following May to accept the proprietorship of a new hotel in Sunapee, New Hampshire.

"A.G. Williams has taken possession of the hotel," the *Barre Gazette* reported, "and George Bancroft has been installed as manager." Summer boarders were already arriving in May and "the prospect is that the house will be well filled early in the season."

In 1892 the *Barre Gazette* reported that "accommodations are wholly inadequate to demand. Barre as a summer resort has come to stay."

In November 1892, the hotel was nearly lost in a fire that struck next door. A.G. Williams' store was ablaze.

"The heat from burning oil and other flammable material became so intense that it appeared nothing short of a miracle could save Hotel Barre or the large dwelling house of E.W. Bullard situated north of the store. The pump in the basement of the hotel was manned, and water forced to the upper story, where it was taken in pails and poured on the smoking side of the building. This, and the steam from the engine that was turned on from time to time, undoubtedly saved the hotel."

"Origin of the fire is a mystery, but it is supposed to be the work of rats."

In the summer of 1893, visitors at the hotel were enjoying an exhibit at the library museum of a recently acquired Mexican sombrero and also a fine collection of stuffed birds given by late Dr. George Brown.

In 1895, George M. Luce, who had managed hotels in Presque Isle and Buckfield, Maine, was at the helm at the Hotel Barre. Mrs. Luce was "untiring in her efforts to please her guests."

Everything sounded wonderful on the surface, but Hotel Barre was suffering through the pangs of change. At the top of one of the stocks of Barre Hotel Company, now at the Barre Historical Society, the word "failed" is penciled in. The company went into receivership and Henry Woods of Boston, being the mortgage holder, took possession.

Through the years the episode has been simplified to read that Henry Woods bought the hotel and gave it to the Barre Village Improvement Society. According to tax books, Henry Woods owned it from 1895 to 1897.

The minutes of the April 1898 meeting of BVIS read as follows: "President Mr. Simonds read a letter from Henry Woods of Boston, in which he made the proposition to give Hotel Barre property to BVIS, provided certain other parties with whom he had been negotiating did not accept the proposition before morning."

BVIS voted unanimously to accept the gift, and sent a telegram by a letter fully acknowledging the gift. The deed was passed April 20, 1898.

When Henry Woods offered Hotel Barre to the BVIS, it was, in essence, being given back to many of his same townspeople who had

invested in the Barre Hotel Company. Would it be a boon or a boondoggle?

Repairs and insurance took their toll. In January, the Hotel committee was to negotiate the sale of the hotel with the intent that BVIS should realize \$8,000. P. Mirick Harwood, who had been managing the hotel, offered \$6,000. A letter from Henry Woods in Boston expressed his surprise. He thought they should get more.

The society decided not to accept Harwood's offer. He was disappointed, "confident that no person could pay more than he had offered and run a clean house free from the liquor trade."

In September, 1899, George R. Prouty, proprietor of the Summit House in Athol, offered to rent the hotel at \$500. per year for one year, April or May first to the same date of 1900.

Finally, BVIS voted to sell the Barre Hotel property and the A.G. Williams property, where the bowling alley was, to Ellanora M. Prouty for \$7,500. Proceeds from the sale of the hotel went to the Henry Woods Fund of BVIS.

Having disposed of Hotel Barre, the BVIS could get back to their primary task of beautifying the center of town.

Barre was truly a vacation town in the years that George Prouty was proprietor. Brochures issued during his tenure told of easy access to marts of trade, spring water, golf links, tennis grounds, and opportunities for boating, fishing, driving and tallyho rides to Wachusett Mountain.

Every fall the Brunswick Foxhound Club came to Hotel Barre for a two-week stay. Red-jacketed riders on horseback and barking hounds were a common sight dashing through the fields and bounding over the stone walls in town.

By 1912 Hotel Barre and the center of town were wired for electricity. In June "122 alumni and former members of Barre High School sat down at a banquet beneath the electric chandeliers and dined on roast turkey with wine jelly, olives, egg salad, cold boiled ham, mashed potatoes, banana fritters with wine sauce, ice cream sherbet, assorted cakes, rolls and coffee."

George Prouty early in the season added a Stanley Steamer mountain-wagon of twelve passenger capacity for conveying passengers to and from the Barre stations, "its bright carmine being in strong contrast with the somber colors of the other automobiles."

In the last week in August the *Barre Gazette* carried the news of the death of Mrs. Helen Durning Prouty in Roxbury where she had been at home with her sister during the long months of her final illness. In eulogizing her, the Gazette noted her thoughtfulness, energy, ability, and tact. "She made friends of every guest. She was affable, cordial, and in many ways helpful to the community. She was free from all ostentation, but a general promoter of the good."

Mrs. Prouty's name was really Ellanora, but she was known as Helen. Years later she would return to the hotel as the ghost, "Nellie."

In December, 1914, George Prouty married Annie B. Naylor. She and her sister, dressmakers in Boston, had been vacationing at Hotel Barre for a number of years. Thereafter, the hotel closed at the end of October and the Proutys spent their winters in San Diego, California.

The Brunswick Foxhound Club announced in 1930 that they would be moving their meets to Putnum, Connecticut, where there were larger facilities.

In 1934, George Prouty, in ill health, nevertheless kept the hotel open for two guests who had been coming here summers for fifteen years. He died that year.

It has been written that he not only gave his guests fine meals, but there was always a "Prouty atmosphere" and a kind of "at home" feeling about his hostelry.

Annie B. Prouty decided to sell the hotel. A succession of brief ownerships followed. In 1941, the Board of Selectmen had failed to grant a liquor license to Hotel Barre. Mr. Sykes, the manager, and Mr. Bellavance, the owner, said that the hotel would probably have to be torn down. They were trying to sell the building, without avail. After much wrangling and much publicity, the license was granted. The hotel stayed.

From 1942 to 1960 Harry and Sarkis "Sam" Markarian owned the hotel. It was during their tenure that the Mattellos, father and son, from Connecticut painted murals in the Barre Room, the upstairs bar and the Cotillion Room. There was scenery of Barre and other places; there were scrolls on the ceiling, and the four seasons, Spring, a young girl in Roman days, scantily clad; Summer with flowers in her arms; Autumn, her hair tinted with gray; Winter with wrinkles of age and wisdom.

In 1956, its side towards Grove Street scorched, Hotel Barre was once again spared when the Williams Block burned to the ground.

Musa Ali was owner from 1960 to 1965, when he sold the hotel to Edward and Linda Mansueti and went back to Fitchburg to full-time barbering.

Through the years there were banquets and weddings in the dining rooms. Always the bar in the basement, the Hunt Club, shored up the hotel financially.

The Mansuetis brought Country Western Music to the area; Elton Britt, Jean Shepard, and Lee Moore were among the stars who performed at the Hunt Club. During the summer months there were jambores with several bands playing.

There were political rallies. Three governors were received at the re-named Barre Guest House; Endicott Peabody, John Volpe, and Francis Sargent, three times. Once the Ink Spots played both upstairs and down

in the Hunt Club.

In 1974, Barre Guest House sponsored the Clydesdale horses in the town's Bicentennial parade.

Planning to retire and move to Florida, the Mansuetis sold the hotel to Michael Ball in 1980. He in turn sold it to William Eddy, who shortly afterward abandoned the building, leaving the cold to take over and the pipes to freeze.

The court appointed local realtor William Neylon as receiver while the Mansuetis went about the process of repossessing.

That was accomplished July 21, 1981 when Eli George, Auctioneer, sold the property to Eddie and Linda Mansueti, the highest bidders, for \$144,000, the amount of the mortgage.

Bill Neylon and his wife, Carol, bought the hotel from the Mansuetis August 20, 1981. It was now The Barre Inn.

As proprietor Bill Neylon hoped to have antique auto meets, resort weekends, trips as of old to Wachusett Mountain. He envisioned old-time hay rides. But it was the time when oil prices skyrocketed. Unemployment was rampant. There was little opportunity for creative implementation of his ideas.

He initiated dinner theater parties, in which Barre Players performed plays such as *Give 'em Hell Harry*, with Tim Waite as Harry Truman and *Same Time Next Year*, with Brent and Debie Hopkins playing lead roles. He also set up an outdoor cafe.

The restaurant did well, "but there is a tight margin of profit in the food business," Bill said. He finally had to admit that he couldn't continue and the Mansuetis took back the hotel.

He would continue in the real estate business and he and Carol would go on to other ventures, including the restoration of the Light House Block across the common.

After a failed attempt by Historic Inns of America, a Chicago-based firm, to buy the hotel, the Mansuetis in August 1985, sold to MRW Inc. of Newport, Rhode Island for \$265,000.

In the early 1980s Douglas M. Merrifield and Nancy Lee Wright, his partner in a real estate business and an antique shop, were looking over brochures in anticipation of investing in a resort hotel.

Suddenly Doug saw the Barre Hotel and realized he had stayed there as a young boy. "I had to have it," he was later quoted as saying.

After the purchase there began two years of intensive renovation and decorating to bring the hotel to the degree of opulence and elegance it had never known in its almost one hundred years of existence.

Nancy Lee Wright's husband, retired naval officer Kenneth Wright, would be manager. Kevin Kelley, contractor, with his carpenters and painters, worked for two years. The first and third floors were already in use as they worked on the second floor.

Continental breakfasts, gourmet lunches, and dinners served by candlelight drew patrons from near and far to Hotel Barre. There were weddings on the bandstand with receptions in the Cotillion Room. For celebration of birthdays, anniversaries, and reunions Hotel Barre was the place of choice and a choice place to go.

The Hunt Club was redecorated and became the Side Door Saloon.

June 10, 1989 Hotel Barre celebrated its one hundredth anniversary with a country fair on South Park, music from the bandstand and tours of the splendid hotel. Ken Wright led hundreds of visitors on tours and pointed out the rooms where, he said, Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Calvin Coolidge had slept and where "Nellie," the ghost, had recently taken up residence. In the evening there was a champagne reception by invitation only. The event was one of Barre's finest days.

In the spring of 1990, Hotel Barre was honored by the Victorian Society of America, New England Chapter, by being selected as the recipient of the 1990 award for "Outstanding Preservation and Conservation." The presentation of the award to owners Nancy Lee Wright and Douglas M. Merrifield took place at Old South Church in Boston.

Everything sounded wonderful on the surface, but the hotel had been operating under the regulations of Chapter 11 protection since February 1, 1989.

On August 27, 1990, MRW, Inc. was declared insolvent by a federal magistrate and forced to close. The business listed \$1.8 million in liabilities and over \$2 million in assets.

On August 29, 1990 at 3:50 in the morning, a local resident returning home from work saw smoke escaping from the windows of Hotel Barre. He immediately went to the dispatcher's office to report the fire.

Firefighters and spectators arrived. Townspeople stood in awe and sadness for days as the venerable structure came down. The chandelier in the Cotillion Room crashed. The tower tumbled. Chimneys fell to the wrecker's crane. The Jewel of Central Massachusetts lay in ruins.

To recapture the ambiance that characterized Hotel Barre, Matthew Donlin, evening manager at Hotel Barre, established the beautifully decorated restaurant, Colonel Isaac Barre Fine Dining and Meeting House Tavern across the common in the Jenkins-Mechanics Block. The Grand Opening, July 4, 1991, featured jazz composer-pianist Deborah Franciose at the baby grand piano.

Although Barre is no longer the tourist mecca that Hotel Barre in its final years brought it to be, out-of-towners do arrive daily to dine in this gracious country setting.

Hotel Barre itself lives on in memories and memorabilia, including two paintings by artist Frank Bly of Hardwick: a winter scene early in

the century, and the painting "Where Will Nellie Go?," in which the vaporous apparition is shown escaping from the charred building under the light of a full moon.

TOWN HOUSE

In the early days of history of Barre, business and town meetings were conducted in the Church Meeting House. In exchange for using that building, the town provided the maintenance of the building.

Because new religious ideas and practices were developing in the early 1800s, no one wanted to go to just one parish. In 1830 the town realized the necessity to construct a Town House, totally separate from the Church Meeting House. The building of a suitable edifice was approved at a Town Meeting in March, 1836. A committee was appointed to direct the erection and was composed of the following people: Charles Lee, Charles Rice, Otis Allen, Frances Rice, and David Bacon. Land was purchased from Willard Broad. The basement construction cost \$600 and was built with stone from Rice's quarry on Hawes Hill. George S. Allen, a prosperous farmer, was a noted stone layer and had charge of laying the foundation of the town house. Jonas Rider assisted him. The stones were hewed by Lot and Willard Rice, expert stone cutters. The remainder of the structure was contracted to Sprague and Beech for the sum of \$4,192.38.

The 1839 Annual Town Meeting was held in the newly, built building. In the fall of that year, permission was granted to let a normal school (a training school for teachers) use the "Second story above the basement" for a period of three years. The Normal School was under the direction of the State Board of Education and was the second such institution in the state. Horace Mann gave the dedicatory address in February, 1838. The school was transferred in 1842 to Westfield. The rooms vacated by The Normal School were lent to the high school in Barre. The teacher was charged with the duty to keep the rooms in good repair. The high school remained in the Town Hall until 1900, when the Henry Woods School Building was given to the town.

Through the years, many organizations were granted permission to use space in the Town Hall. The Methodists Church met in the building until their church was completed, the Masonic Lodge meetings were held in the building for many years, the Free Church used the first floor, the Barre Fire Engineers finished a room in the basement to house Engine Co. #1, the Worcester West Agricultural Society used the basement for storage, cattle pens and the town "lock-up" were also in the basement. The Grange has used the old school rooms since the early 1900s. "Moving pictures" were shown there through the mid 1900s, and in recent years, the Barre Players Club uses the stage for their popular



Town House/Town Hall, Barre

theater presentations.

Several structural changes were made to the Town Hall. In 1852, new stairs were built to make "ascent to the upper hall more convenient," and in 1859 a stage was erected in the main hall. Fireproof vaults and town offices were built in the basement in the early 1940s. A new electrical clock was donated in 1974 by the trustees of the Unitarian Church. The old Revere Bell from that church was hung in the cupola. In the same year, Barre's Bicentennial Year, the building was included in the National Register of Historic Sites and Structures.

On January 6, 1981, a disastrous fire destroyed a great portion of the historic structure. The front section, including the portico, columns, stairways, and some woodwork, were spared destruction due to the conscientious work of fire departments from Barre and nearby towns. Valuable records were saved by officials and townspeople who formed a human chain to remove them from the burning building.

Restoration of the Greek Revival building, known as the Town Hall or Town House as original documents called it, was the successful result of total cooperation of volunteers, artisans, the insurance company, and town officials. Today she proudly stands in all her glory, a stately focal point of beauty and activity on Barre Common.

WOODS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Small libraries were established in Barre before 1857, the year in which the Annual Town Meeting accepted a bequest of \$500 from the estate of Samuel S. Gates, and appropriated a like amount in matching funds to begin what was known from the first as the Barre Town Library. An act of the Massachusetts legislature had, in 1842, provided \$15 in state money for books as long as a town provided matching funds. Mr. Gates, a small farmer who had gone blind and had papers read to him by his wife, followed the same procedure.

An Executive Committee was chosen by the town to make an initial expenditure of \$300. Books and a bookcase were located in the town Post Office which served as the library for almost thirty years. Competing for the attention of the Postmaster, the de facto librarian, with postal patrons was not the best possible situation many library users could imagine. From as early as 1875, fund-raising events were held to "form the nucleus of a fund for the erection at some future time, of a library building." Progress, however, was slow. In a letter to the *Barre Gazette* in February, 1884, one "Mary Ann" issued the warning: "if the men have not the courage to remove the library to more suitable quarters, provide a competent and obliging librarian, and furnish a new catalog, some of us who have heretofore been opposed to female suffrage will, I think, be found upon the other side in the future."

In 1885, seventeen of the leading men of the town incorporated themselves, "their associates and successors," as the Barre Library Association "for the purpose of procuring, by purchase or otherwise, of lands and buildings for the accommodation of the public library of the town of Barre, and a reading room in connection therewith, and for other kindred uses." Almost at once this act of hope was handsomely complemented by Henry Woods (1830-1901), a native of Barre who had got rich as the European representative of the Boston firm of C.F. Hovey. At his own expense, Mr. Woods offered to provide a new library building on grounds across the street from North Park, all to be in the ownership and control of the Barre Library Association.

Work on the foundation of the Woods Memorial Library, so named to honor departed members of the donor's family, began in June 1886. Brick-laying got underway at the beginning of August. By February 1887, the building was finished; its gas works were installed by early July, and on Tuesday, August 30th, at 2:00 p.m., it opened for business.

For more than a century, the Woods Memorial Library has housed the main library collection. The days and hours of the operation of the library have remained stable, five days a week on most days with afternoon and evening hours and two hours between. From 1908, branches were established in South Barre and Barre Plains. The universality of



Woods Memorial Library, Barre Circa 1890

the automobile rendered such satellites obsolete after World War II.

In their charter and bylaws, the seventeen founding members of the Barre Library Association charged themselves and their (to 1992) 144 successors with the additional responsibility “of aiding in the maintenance and increase of said library, and the establishment and maintenance of a reading room, of providing and supporting courses of lectures on scientific, historical, literary and other subjects; of forming and maintaining a museum containing specimens in natural history, works of art, antiquities and other objects of interest; and for the purpose of collecting the annals of said town and the genealogies of its inhabitants.”

More than a year before the Woods Memorial Library opened, the heirs of Ginery Twichell presented a large portrait of the man in his prime to the Association for display in the new building. The area over the marble fireplace on the main floor of the library may well have been designed for the impressive portrait of Isaac Barre, copied from the original by Gilbert Stuart in the possession of the Earls of Amherst. Given to the town by Henry Woods in 1874, it appears to have been moved from its original location in the Town Hall to this more splendid venue, no doubt with Mr. Woods’ consent and the collaboration of the library’s architect who was Henry D. Woods, the donor’s son.

Other notable donations to the library and the museum were those by Frank Root who assembled an Indian artifact collection which includes relics of the Massacre of Wounded Knee, the less embarrassing local wildlife collection taken, stuffed, and mounted by Henry W. Harwood between 1857 and 1907 and a stuffed collection of birds of the world donated by Dr. George Brown.

Upon her death in 1925, Mrs. Mary Brimblecom Martin willed not only books and items collected on her trips around the world but also contributed the money to establish the Mary Martin Lecture and Concert

Fund which has provided the community with evenings of edification and diversion. Since 1970, Mr. Anthony A. Borgatti, Jr. (Spag), of Shrewsbury, has supported the Library Association's Olive I. and Anthony A. Borgatti, Jr. Fund for the purchase of books that might not otherwise be acquired.

In 1889 the town established the Board of Library Trustees to oversee the conduct of library services. Notable and long-time members of the board have been Dr. George A. Brown from 1889 to 1939, Charles G. Allen (II) from 1910 to 1946, Anita M. Rich from 1926 to 1976, and Robert H. Allen from 1956 to 1990. Long-time librarians have been Carrie E. Read from 1903 to 1929 and James E. Sullivan from 1967 to the present.

BARRE BANDSTANDS

During the mid-19th century, almost every town and village throughout the expanding nation began, as if on cue, to form bands of local musicians for the entertainment of their fellowmen. Youth and



Concert, North Park, Barre 1850s

townsmen from all facets of the community such as farmers, merchants, hostellers, teachers, blacksmiths, and lawyers gathered occasionally during the months and happily rehearsed. They were readying the group to play concerts outdoors on soft, summer afternoons and evenings for the immense pleasure of the citizenry. It was a “typically American” idea that has endured.



“Pagoda Roof” Bandstand, built 1882

As concerts increased in popularity, the need arose for a bandstand from which the musicians could be seen as well as heard. During one hundred thirty-odd years, Barre Common has seen a succession of three bandstands. Each bandstand has been a little larger and more handsome than the forerunner. The first stand, a raised square platform, approached by steep steps, and surrounded by a patterned railing, is documented as having been built in North Park during the year 1859, and it thriftily served multiple uses. Besides being a stage for the band, it was a pulpit for speeches and served well as a judge’s stand during parades and cattle shows (when the agricultural fairs took place right on the common).

Soon after the Civil War, when townspeople were planning a memorial in honor of the many young Barre men who had served their country, North Park was chosen as the most fitting spot on which to place such an important monument. This was a plan which necessitated moving the bandstand. With almost no effort, the small structure was moved a short distance away on the center Common, almost in front of James Bullard's pillared house (now the Barre Historical Society building). There it stayed, usefully, until 1882 when it was deemed high time to build a brand new bandstand on the same site. It was deemed that the new bandstand should provide protection for performers and add more charm to the common. Moneys were collected by subscription, but not without a mite of controversy. A few citizens objected so roundly to the placement of the bandstand that a few donations were withdrawn.

According to the fashion of the times, the stand was built with a "pagoda roof" which, to this day, is used almost universally, as the ubiquitous bandstand design.

Each summer musicians in the band gathered weekly to play afternoon or evening concerts, choosing times (often on market day) when families might conveniently drive into town or arrive on foot to listen and socialize.

During the years before World War I, a second local band composed of particularly fine musicians, formed in South Barre and succeeded the Center group which had diminished in membership. Weekly performances shifted to Wednesday nights.

The worn, much used Bandstand Number 2, stood for more than forty years before public opinion indicated that the time was ripe for a replacement. A committee, called the Barre Public Amusement Association and chaired by Mr. Martin Smith, was formed to discuss ways and means of providing a new and larger bandstand. The *Barre Gazette*, on April 16, 1931, recorded the committee's decision to erect a new bandstand. Completion of the third bandstand was anticipated before the concert season. Further, the article announced that the new bandstand would be a memorial to Mr. G. Harding Allen, one of most prominent citizens of Barre, who had died the previous autumn.

Financing was to be accomplished by "popular subscription" as an expression of warm, community sentiment. Interestingly, children were urged to take part in the drive, contributing "quarters, dimes and nickels," thus demonstrating their youthful importance and early potential in carrying out community projects! Because the plan called for placing this new bandstand on the same site, the aging 1882 structure was moved to Rocking Stone Park (off Petersham Road, Route 122) for use as a picnic lodge. Unfortunately, within a short time, "the lodge" had vanished from the Park, leaving no trace and has been a mystery still unsolved.

As to the planning of the proposed memorial, the *Barre Gazette* kept readers informed. A Boston architectural firm of Blackwell, Clapp, Whitman, and Clark was selected to insure "a substantial, dignified bandstand." The intent was to have this entire project ready by summer-time, although slight delays interfered with the goal. In fact, the building contract was not awarded until June. It went to E.J. Cross Company of Worcester with the stipulation that Barre labor "shall be employed so far as possible." A further item required that the stonework base should "match the ornamental stonewall bordering the Allen Estate," which was



Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand, Barre

within view across the road. That wall marks the entrance to Allen Drive between Shawmut Bank and the U.S. Post Office.

By late July, the bandstand had become a reality and painters were putting the final brush strokes on the new centerpiece on the common. Unquestionably, the highlight of the Summer of 1931 in Barre took place on the evening of August 6th, when the bandstand was formally dedicated to the memory of Harding Allen. Before noon on that day, automobiles were being parked in "best-view" places around the common, and estimations were that two thousand cars had lined every street leading into town.

Mr. Robert G. Williams acted as Master of Ceremonies with the Reverend Michael Mulhane, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, offering the main address. There followed brief remarks by town officers and the committee and a rousing concert by the famous Worcester Brass Band. The memorial was pronounced a fine example of "achievement through cooperation," and the evening declared a triumph. The pleasant feeling was confirmed permanently by the simple inscription that appears on a

bronze tablet:

Given by the people of Barre
and vicinity
in memory of their beloved friend and fellow citizen
Harding Allen
1867 - 1930

It should be stated that families "in the vicinity," although well beyond the bounds of Barre, did subscribe generously to the memorial effort. Beginning in the twenties when motorcars allowed Worcester County folk mobility to take an "after-supper" ride, drives to Barre on a Wednesday eve became a weekly treat. Literally, hundreds of families attended the concert from many communities, and Barre was dubbed "the band concert town." "Grown-ups" listened to the South Barre Band seated in cars safely protected from mosquitoes or unprotected from mosquitoes on blankets spread over the grass. Small fry scampered breathlessly round and round the bandstand. Older siblings met friends, munched Jack's famous popcorn (.10 per box), or licked ice cream scooped on crunchy cones (.05 cents) at the Palace Garden. We report that this amiable scenario continues to take place every summer. Only the names have changed.

The Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand became such an important



Jacks Popcorn, Exchange Street, Barre

symbol of Barre that for the Bicentennial year 1974, the image of the bandstand was part of the official Bicentennial coin design. For many years, this special bandstand, like those built earlier, has served a multitude of people and purposes, in addition to functioning as a music center. Often used as a landmark for travelers, it is also a splendid place to stop and rest, to serve as a rostrum for peace meetings and poetry readings, or to be a shelter sought by playing children caught in a sudden shower. It is a landmark that continues to dominate and ornament the middle Common with pleasing grace.



River scene, Barre Plains

BARRE PLAINS

By the time the first settlers spread into the area that was to become the town of Barre, there were very few native Americans left to be encountered. Yet, we know that they were once numerous.

Temple, in his *History of North Brookfield*, stated that an Indian path was discovered in 1648 that passed from the present town of Weston through areas that became Sudbury, Stow, Lancaster, Princeton, the south of Barre to New Braintree, then West Brookfield, Warren, Brimfield and eventually to the present location of Springfield. This path connected various Indian settlements. Several paths were along the

Ware or Nenameseck River Valley.

As the settlers arrived in the vicinity that was to become Barre Plains, vestiges of the Indian encampment were common. On the property settled by Captain Woodbury near the Ox Bow on the Ware River were traces of old Indian barns. Fire stones were common proving the former existence of a large number of Indian dwellings. Temple recorded a raid by marauding Naunutuks in 1647 on a Quaboag tribe settlement "probably in the town of Barre and five Indians were killed and their wigwam robbed."

In a handwritten note in the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Francis Nourse of Barre wrote that Indian battle games were held on the John Wadsworth farm which was the area being called Fort Hill. This farm was nearly opposite the present Company Farm Road on Oakham Road in Barre Plains.

According to Matthew Walker in the *History of Worcester County* by Hind, settlers were encouraged to locate in Barre Plains. The plains afforded abundant grazing lands for cattle in the summer and a source of sufficient hay from fields undoubtedly used previously by the Indians.

A few scattered farms were established when Seth Pratt moved to Barre from Shrewsbury in 1808. He soon built a dam across the Ware River, dug a canal through a hill, and erected a grist and saw mill at the Plains near the present small pond adjacent to Main Street. He drained the wet lands with irrigation ditches and produced mowing land for his livestock.

The mill and the improved condition of the canal attracted more people. Pratt, himself, opened a tannery but soon had competition from a man named Barker. A tavern opened by Oliver Tatman and Zenas Winslow in 1782, in the house just north of the present Adams Cemetery, prospered. Another tavern owned by a Mr. Lyon was on the corner of the road to New Braintree. Joseph, Seth Pratt's son, opened a store. A post office was established in 1815.

The next generation continued to improve the area which became known as Barre Plains. Phineas Heywood, who had married Seth Pratt's daughter Alice, built additions to the mills as he assumed command of their operation. He had already constructed a spinning machine or cotton cloth in about 1814, and shortly after that period he built one for spinning wool. He soon began the manufacture of woolen frocking of a "superior quality."

On January 24, 1845, a notice in the *Barre Gazette* stated that the firm of Phineas Heywood and Son would be dissolved and accounts were requested to be settled. In the same issue was an advertisement that the manufacture of cassimeres, satinettes, frocking, flannel blanketing, and stocking yarn would be continued under the name of Seth P. Heywood, who was Phineas's son, on the same location.

Joseph Pratt sold his store to Benjamin Clark who had learned the business as a clerk in a store in New Braintree. Clark soon sold his store to move to a better location in Barre Center. Some of Clark's ledgers are in the possession of the Barre Historical Society.

Clark's successor as the proprietor of the store at the Plains was Harding P. Woods, who also removed here from New Braintree. He, too, improved his lot by purchasing a larger establishment in the center where he continued in business for 34 years. Charles E. Field succeeded Woods at the Plains and remained for several years.

An ad in the *Barre Gazette* reveals that H. Wadsworth was proprietor of the store in Barre Plains and listed "new and fashionable dress goods, cashmeres... gingham, satinets, prints, muslin, parasols and sunshades, along with straw goods for ladies, misses, and children's straw bonnets, bonnet ribbons, flowers of the latest fashion for sale."

Under Hiram Wadsworth, the store underwent many changes including the razing of the old structure and construction of a new one. Later the addition of an ell became necessary.

Lyon's Tavern was taken over in 1830 by Moses H. Felton who was a native of Brookfield and had married Seth Pratt's daughter, Relief. According to Matthew Walker, he was a sharp and shrewd businessman. Felton enlarged the tavern and in 1842 was granted a license by the local selectmen to sell spirituous liquors. He conducted the establishment as a tavern and hotel until his death in 1863. "Ardent spirits abundant" and



Hennikers Bridge, Barre Plains



A Shady Street, Barre Plains

"horse trading and wrestling" were some of the attractions advertised. Felton was also listed in the March 6th, 1830 *Farmer's Gazette* as operator of a grinding mill where plaster was ground at 8 shillings per ton.

Another manufacturing establishment of considerable importance was located just above the junction of the Prince and Ware Rivers. The David Wadsworth Scythe Shop had been in operation for an undetermined number of years when in 1834 it was listed as Stone's Scythe Shop, under the ownership of Joseph H. Stone. Stone had married Lucy Wadsworth. Joseph Stone died of typhoid fever in 1850.

Although of short duration the Wadsworth Brickyard, which was established at Barre Plains near the site of the future railroad tracks west of the bridge over Pratt Brook, had important historical consequences. Sand was hauled from Oakham and clay was obtained nearby. The yard operated for only ten years, but the several old brick houses on Oakham Road in Barre Plains and the brick "tenement" houses in South Barre were constructed from the product. At one time the *Barre Gazette* advertised 200,000 bricks for sale by H. Wadsworth and Company.

The village at Barre Plains continued to grow. The general store came into the hands of Alfred E. Holden and in the 1890s advertised dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes. Holden prospered and in 1899 built an addition and that summer installed in his store a "long distance telephone." He erected a new and attractive residence on the hill overlooking the Plains about one-half mile along the road to Barre Center, now the residence of Earl Sample. Holden retired from business after selling the store to Chamberlain and Holland. Fred B. Holland became the postmaster. The store still stands, but it is now a private residence. It has undergone several ownerships and various small business ventures



Brunswick Hotel, Barre Plains, burned 1920

before it eventually became a home.

A great impetus was given to the economy of the Plains by the construction of two railroads in the last half of the nineteenth century. Both stations were located in the Plains. A railroad turntable was installed, and it became a stopover where some trains stayed overnight. Several railroad families made their homes there, and the passage of several trains a day made the Plains a more lively place. Farmers arrived to unload produce, coaches met each train to pick up travelers, and merchants unloaded goods and raw materials.

The railroad, located a block away, improved the business of the Felton Tavern which under new ownership was known as the Brunswick Fox Club. The Fox Club met each year for fox hunts through the fields and pastures of Barre. Harry Worcester Smith, owner of the mills at Smithville, and T.F. Rich, factory owner in the Plains, were both members of this group. Many of the members were wealthy men from the larger industrial areas of the Northeast. The hotel suffered a disastrous fire in the stables in 1920. Part of the old establishment is now the residence of Henry Puchalsky.

On what is now known as Chamberlain Hill Road, the South Cheese Factory was founded in 1864. Farmers from the area brought their excess milk to the factory where it was converted to cheese, and then shipped via rail to markets. Ads were placed in the local papers encouraging the making of cheese stressing the fact that it would alleviate the heavy chore load of the farm wife. The ready access of the new rail-



Post Office and Store, Barre Plains

roads helped to contribute to the early demise of the industry in 1875. A local "milk car" on the train commenced to run regularly from Barre Plains. Milk contractors of Brigham and Russell in Boston agreed to pay 36 cents per can. The amount of milk delivered to the South Cheese Factory diminished immediately, and it soon closed.

Within a month the local paper reported that "a dozen teams bring milk to the trains, some picking it up for several different dairies" and that "175 cans are sent daily."

The *Barre Gazette* reported that many farmers had not taken advantage of the cheese factory for "there are some who seem to fear that their women folk will contract habits of idleness if they are relieved of the drudgery of making the cheese at home. We believe the farmers' wives generally think favorably of cheese factories."

Industries continued to flourish. Alfred Holden sold his business in Barre and bought a saw and grist mill in the Plains. In 1891 this business was advertised in Anthony's directory as selling flour, grain and feeds. He soon sold the mill and water rights to T. E. Rich Company which established a sash and blind shop which in 1899 employed thirty men.

Through the latter years of the nineteenth century, Austin Flint Adams exerted considerable influence in the Barre Plains area. He obtained the building once operated as a tavern by Zenas Winslow. This property, according to Hazel Hennick (1890-1963), was owned for



Rich Sash and Blind Shop, Barre Plains

sometime by the Nye family. Several Nye brothers had been awarded parcels of land between the Ware River and the Hardwick town line prior to the Revolutionary War. The owners of many farms including that which was obtained by Luke Adams and eventually his son, Austin, were Nye descendants.

Austin Adams continually obtained more land. He built many homes around a piece of land which he sold in 1883 to the Town of Barre which became the Barre Plains Common. Adams was town moderator for twenty-one years and a member of the state legislature for three terms. He became a well known historian of his time. He erected a large shop which housed the Birch and Dunbar Piano Manufactory.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Barre Plains reached its zenith. The village consisted of: "J.E. Holden's Store, Wm. Lawless' Meat Market, Charles Paquin's blacksmith shop, a two-room school, the Boston and Albany R.R. (with passenger and freight stations, water tanks, and coal sheds), the milk shed of C. Brigham and Co., the telegraph office of the Boston and Albany, Boston and Maine Railroad passenger and freight stations, the Hotel Brunswick, three dress makers (Mrs. Mary Paquin, Mrs. Carrie Tuttle, and Mrs. Carrie Hennick), one cobbler shop, thirty-five houses, and nearly 200 inhabitants all within one mile of the post office."

Rich's sash factory continued to prosper, and he built a new residence with all the improvements of the day which was embellished with some stained glass windows. After Rich's death, the residence was pur-



Ethier's Store

chased by Frank Gromelski, and the lower floor was converted into a social club.

The piano factory became a variety of businesses including a shop to make ball bearing toprolls for the textile industry. For a while it served as a schoolhouse for the fifth and sixth grades before the construction of High Plains School. In 1935 it became the Barre Plains Motor Company with Lester Backus and Leslie Stewart, Proprietors. It eventually became a bar room and club under a variety of names and proprietors.

The Brunswick closed. Various people became proprietors of the markets under new names: Stewart's Meat and Provisions Store, Ethier's Market, and Harlow Brothers' Clover Farm Store. Ethier bought Harlow Brothers and moved their store to join his own, whereupon a new post office was built on the vacant lot, only to close in 1975. Armand's Beauty Salon and Backus' Service Station were part of the scene for a while. Rich's factory was idle after his death and was destroyed by fire in 1951.

The thriving little community had been served by a school early in the eighteenth century on the New Braintree Road just before Pratt's Brook and later by a large two story structure nearly opposite the piano factory. Yet it did not have a church. In 1898 the residents set about rectifying that situation. Austin Adams gave a piece of land on the south side of Furnace Road, and an association was formed to construct a building called the Barre Plains Union Chapel. Not associated with any

particular denomination, it was planned to hold church services and Sunday School. Records of the association reveal a continual financial struggle to stay in existence. Visiting preachers from Barre and nearby towns addressed the group. In 1920 the remaining members of the association voted to sell their property to the Wanapan Tribe #141, Improved Order of Red Men. This particular group formerly had their quarters in Coldbrook Springs, but were displaced by the M.D.C. land takeover. The money from the sale of the chapel was distributed among the four Protestant churches in the town.

The Red Men were a fraternal organization who based their principles and rituals upon those characteristics of the American Indian. Like the Indian, their numbers dwindled. The lodge was disbanded and the building under new ownership fell into disrepair.

In 1984, real estate developers installing a new street began to systematically remove the high plateau of the ox bow which gradually obliterating any remaining signs of the Indian village.

EAST BARRE FALLS

The east and west branches of the Ware River, which flow through Hubbardston and Rutland, have their confluence near the Barre-Hubbardston line in the eastern extremities of the town. Just downstream a few hundred yards is an area which was formerly one of the most scenic spots in Barre. Here the river dropped thirty-six feet in a thousand linear feet distance, which created not only a falls of great



East Barre Falls, view looking towards Gleason's Four Corners

beauty, but also a powerful enticement for investors looking for convenient water power. This stretch of river became known as East Barre Falls.

The remnants of numerous old canals and dams, which are now fading from view or have been obliterated by new construction, are evidence that the area had once been the location of several industries in the nineteenth century or before that period. There is some mention in print of at least three different pre-1800 mills.

Walter Clark wrote in his book *Quabbin* that the farmers of the area raised grain for their animals and wool and flax which were spun and woven into yarn and cloth.

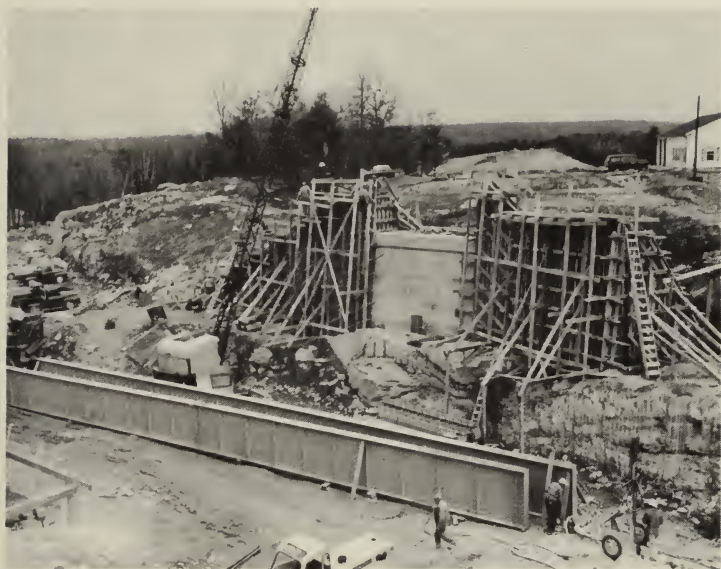
Since the early means of transportation were oxen or draft horses, the most rudimentary geography controlled everyday life. It was necessary to live within easy distance of the mills. For the grist mill was where grain was converted to meal or flour. The sawmill was where the felled trees became usable lumber. The oil mill was where the flax yielded linseed oil. A location on a stream that could support these mills and a few others mills soon became a focal point for the farms and homes in the region.

Charles Harwood, a settler of this area and a person who related many accounts of its early history, stated that his folks told him of the fulling mill at the "Falls" where people could take their rough homespun cloth to be prepared for making clothing. The process consisted of stretching the material on long tables and pounding "fullers earth" into the wool, which softened and cleaned it.

One of the early industries was a wire mill, but it failed and the mill was sold. In 1801, Azariah Ware hired one of the mills and operated a clothiers business which existed for many years. Later he acquired a mill of his own. Ware's homestead, a farm north of the falls, remained in the family over the years and was finally sold by his heirs to the Metropolitan District Commission in 1937.

In 1831, on the east bank of the river at the falls was a saw and shingle mill operated by Silas H. Brett. In 1840, powder kegs were also manufactured there. By 1847, the powder kegs were being produced by James Leather. These kegs were sold to the local powder mill farther down the river between Smithville and Dennyville and also to a plant in Enfield, Connecticut. Kegs were loaded on wagons which were drawn by teams of horses. For many years the teamster for Leather was Newton Munrow who lived in a house owned by his employer at the junction of Coldbrook Road and Reuben Walker Road, a little over a mile south of the coopeage. The trip to Connecticut took three days. The driver and his team would spend a night at the Wilbraham Inn on both legs of the journey.

In the 1840s, Mr. Corbett "butchered and marketed calves" and



Construction of East Barre Falls Dam

attempted to build a large shop at the Falls but was unable to finish it. After Heald's shop burned in Heald Village, Heald bought the partially built Corbett factory and removed it to Heald Village.

Below the falls was a saw and grist mill run by Asa Moore. It is said that the favorite pastime of the young folks was to watch the miller at work. After Asa Moore died, Ethan Bothwell of Oakham continued the operation for two years. Later Mr. Chickering from Rutland worked the mill until he sold it to John Bradshaw. Bradshaw built a larger mill to manufacture rugs and carpets. Some of the machinery was imported from England. The building was destroyed by fire before it could begin operations. Bradshaw ran an ad in the local paper in 1864 that he would take pleasure to inform the public that he had bought "the mills on that never fail stream" at Barre Falls where he would "grind, buy, and sell grain at all hours of the day."

The Barre Falls Reservoir Company was formed in 1874. It was organized and controlled by the Smithville Cotton Mills of Barre, the Gilbertville Woolen Factory, and the Otis Company of Ware (manufacturer of cotton cloth). Most of the water rights were acquired by the newly formed company which intended to build a thirty foot dam and had plans for a huge power project. This project never materialized, and the Corporation finally sold the holdings to the M.D.C. as late as 1946.

As the steam engine, which required less water and was more constant than the intermittent power of a stream, was perfected and as the

costs of transportation became dependent on railroad and roadway, the prudent businessman became aware that the factors dictating the location of his shop were changing. Thus many remote areas where water power was the only asset were gradually abandoned. Barre Falls did not continue to be a prime location and had diminished in importance when the Metropolitan District Commission took the area.

In May 1956, one of a series of major flood control dams administered by the New England Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was started at East Barre Falls to prevent flooding in the Ware and Chicopee River basins. It was also to reduce flood damage in the Connecticut Valley. The steel, reinforced concrete, earth, filled dam is 885 feet in length and 62 feet in width with a storage capacity behind it of 7.9 million gallons of water. When water is held back it floods lands in Hubbardston, Barre, Oakham, and Rutland while controlling a drainage area of 55 square miles.

The construction of this project was completed in December, 1957 and dedicated on May 16, 1958. Town officials from Barre, Hubbardston, and neighboring towns were present at the dedication.

In a Directory of Recreation Opportunities at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Projects, the Barre Falls Flood Control Dam area is listed as a "popular hunting and stream fishing area." Also included in the area and the neighboring state lands are snowmobile trails. Numerous back roads and cart roads crisscross the area which beckons the hiker, horseback rider, picnicker, cross country skier, and nature lover.

COLDBROOK

The village of Coldbrook was unusual in that it existed within the boundaries of two different towns, Barre and Oakham. However, most of the village proper was within the bounds of Oakham and included stores, hotels, school, mineral springs, a railroad station, and most of the industries. The church, the cemetery, a second railroad station, and several of the residences and farms were within the town of Barre.

The center was originally located within the Barre town limits on a hill north of the site of the later center village. The establishment of grist mills, fulling mills, and sawmills along Coldbrook (Parker's Brook) caused numerous dams to be built for the use of enterprises. The construction of the railroads along the river valley was the final determining factor to move all businesses into that location. The main road to Worcester followed the same route.

The first settlers in the area were the Craige family who established a tavern on the Coldbrook. Much of the subsequent building in the immediate vicinity was done by the Craige sons and sons-in-law. Soon



Parker's General Store, Coldbrook

after, settlers from the Sutton area began to clear and work land at the crossroads north of the Craige's home and within the town boundary of Barre. The Sibleys and Adams were notable among these.

Of interest is the story of the First Baptist Society of Barre, which has been discussed in detail in the section on churches in this book. At this area, which was later called Adams Corners, was a store and several houses. A school house was located a short distance down the road to the covered bridge. Luke Spooner's blacksmith shop was located a half mile to the north. A quarter of a mile to the south on Potash Brook, later in the century, a carpenter and cabinet shop was operated for many years by Ned Stearns, a Civil War veteran.

By 1890 Coldbrook was served by two railroads. The Boston and Maine ran through the village, and the Ware River Branch of the Boston and Albany ran north along the west side of the Ware River, passing between the church and the parsonage. When the mills in White Valley and South Barre reached their industrial peak, between 1900 and 1929, some of the hotels in Coldbrook were used as boarding houses by the mill hands. The road to Barre from Worcester that ran through the village was designated Route 122 after the advent of the motor car.

Coldbrook Village in both towns was wiped off the map by the M.D.C. land taking process in the 1920s and 1930s. Homes, farms, and businesses were all purchased or taken by eminent domain proceedings and then razed.

There are those who still remember Coldbrook Village, and when



Main Street, South Barre

passing the area recall the landmarks. To the newcomer or traveler, the village location is simply a wilderness area with a sparkling stream tempting the trout fisherman to stop and test his latest lure.

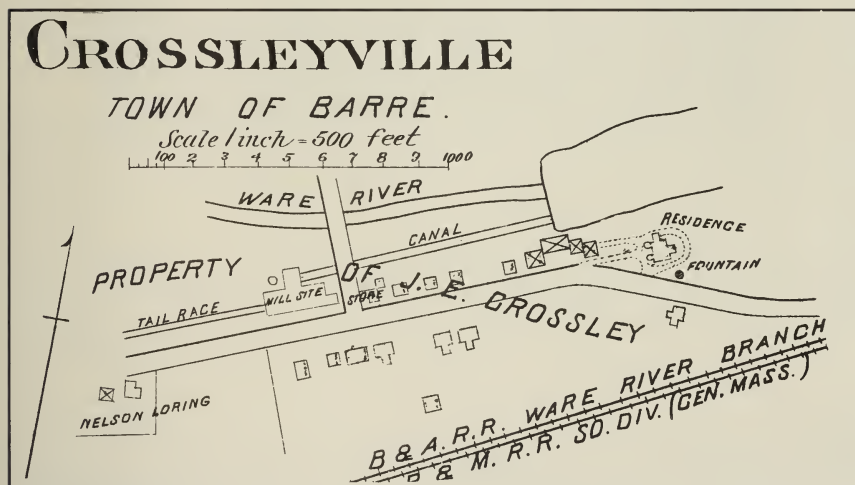
SOUTH BARRE

Barre, like so many other towns, was made up of several villages. A village usually emerged around a mill. The owner would build his home at the mill site and eventually homes for those employed by the mill would be nearby. Thus a cluster of residences would come into existence. Soon a store, a church, school and even a post office were added, and a village would be formed.

One of the larger villages in Barre was what is known as South Barre. In 1834, Paul and Hiram Wadsworth, son of John Wadsworth of Uxbridge, Henry Holbrook of Northbridge, and Austin Cowles of Rutland purchased acreage on the Ware River. They erected a brick building, and established the firm of Wadsworth Woolen Company. A dam and canal were built. A somewhat smaller brick building was constructed in the rear of the mill on the opposite side of the canal and used as a dye shop. Three houses made of bricks from Wadsworth's Brickyard at Barre Plains were also built at this time. These houses, still standing, were used as boarding houses and tenements. This area is

known as Trafalgar Square. Several other wooden structures were built which backed the river. These, plus a few other buildings, comprised the village.

In 1837, the Wadsworth Company failed, according to Matthew Walker, partly from inexperience and partly due to the panic of 1837. Shortly after, Jonathan Wheeler of Grafton acquired the management of a newly organized company, which proved quite successful for a time, operating in the Wadsworth buildings. In the spring of 1842, a series of failures in business caused the mill to become idle once again. In the autumn of that year, a Mr. Kendall of Boston, a wool merchant, gained possession of the property and placed it under the control of Luther Wright and Peter Farnum. They, too, struggled for a while, and then the company sold to a Mr. Fisher also of Grafton. Fisher and Edward Denny were involved in a real estate exchange. Denny acquired the mill property in 1844. The village became known as Dennyville, and the value of the property was estimated at \$300,000.



Crossleyville

In March 1845, Edward Denny of Leicester, a shrewd individual with a good business sense, benefited when the town was required to set off Edward Deans' "real and personal estate known as Barre Woolen Village and individuals living therein to a new school district #15." Denny continued in business for over twenty years, and under his aegis the village of Dennyville continued to grow. He took his residence in Barre and held several town offices. He shrewdly changed the product of his business operations to meet the demands of the market.

In 1857 during a panic, labor hours were reduced, and in February 1858 a serious fire destroyed the mill and repair shop. The following spring the plans for rebuilding were executed and a larger, four, story mill was constructed. Business continued successfully until the Civil War. The outlook appeared bleak, but a contract was signed to finish cloth for the Army. However, the project was not profitable for the company as it was unable to compete with larger manufacturing plants. A light flannel cloth, mostly for ladies' wear, was introduced, and this project prospered as the goods sold rapidly.

After another period of depression, the mill became idle in the summer of 1866. A partner, George Mixter of Hardwick, became associated with Mr. Denny and the mill resumed business. After a period of about eight months, the doors were closed. The mill was leased to a partnership which failed, and Mr. Denny took possession of the mill once again. It remained idle until his death in 1874 when his heirs acquired the property.

In 1880 after another period of failures, the property was purchased by the firm of "Ware River Woolen Company." This company made some alterations in the mills, and erected some more dwellings. Cloth for pantaloons and coating was manufactured. This, too, proved unprofitable, and again the mill was closed.

In 1882 the mill property was purchased by James E. Crossley, and a favorable start was made. In June 1884 a serious fire destroyed the mill and machinery. While plans to rebuild dragged, the village, now known as Crossleyville, became a ghost town since most of the inhabitants had moved. A new, one, story factory was completed in 1891 with new machinery. This facility operated for a short while, then disaster in the form of another fire struck in 1893. The debris was cleared, but due to a slack time in the woolen business the plans were scrapped for rebuilding.

In 1900 Crossley sold the mill rights to Francis Willey, a wealthy and successful wool broker from Bradford, England. Rebuilding got under way, and in 1903 the shaping of a mill began to take place. The following year the machinery for combing wool was installed, and the product of wool "tops" (fine wool ready for spinning) were sold to mills elsewhere.

In 1909 another mill was built, and by the following year the mill was in full operation. The Nornay Worsted Company, where a worsted yarn was made, was of a brick construction and erected across the street from the main mill. Foremen and department heads were imported from England. A hotel, homes for management, and workers' residences were built. The Blythe House was named after Mr. Willey's home in England, and Barre residents knew it as the Hotel Blythe which became incorporated into the Bradford Apartments.

New houses were built with a "plot of ground for a garden" for the imported labor. Rent for six rooms was \$3.25 per week. A social club, store, and theater were constructed. Land was given so that two church-



Nornay Mill/Barre Wool Combing Company, South Barre

es could be erected: the Christ Episcopal Church in 1911 and the St. Thomas a Becket Roman Catholic Church in 1917. Catholic services had been held in Barre Wool Hall, Columbia Hall, and Florence Hall before the church was built.



Blythe Hotel, South Barre

As in other parts of the nation, there were periods of labor unrest in South Barre. On March 15, 1912, a general strike was initiated. Special police and state police were appointed by the town to quell violence which arose at intervals. On March 29, 1912, workmen returned to their work, and the strike ended. From July 25 to September 21, 1939, Barre Wool Combing Company suffered through another strike. The cost of the strike was a heavy burden on the town. Salaries for special police and other expenses of the strike amounted to well over \$36,000. Nornay Worsted Company closed its operation in 1935 and the building became a storehouse for Barre Wool Combing Company.

Barre Wool Combing Company was under English ownership until 1935 when Uxbridge Worsted Company purchased the controlling interest. In February 1961, the Barre Wool Combing Company, Ltd., was purchased by the Top Company of Boston and Ivy Enterprises, Inc., a Top Company affiliate. Top Company discontinued manufacturing in June 1974. Machinery was sold, and the building properties were placed for sale. The village, of approximately 1200 people, was out of work. Most of the tenants had purchased their homes from the company, and the village known as Wadsworth Village, Dennyville, Crossleyville, and most recently South Barre was now without a principal industry.

South Barre has its own post office, fire house, and water supply. The town of Barre voted in 1982 to purchase this domestic water supply reputed to be of high quality. Some areas of the mill building are rented to a few small businesses, but the larger portion of the building complex remains empty and idle.

“BOGUE”

According to the listings of post offices, “Bogue” was a post office at Barre Station from 1900 to 1909. The Bogue place was what later became the Izzi home on the road leading to Oakham. Charles A. Bogue owned the dwelling and four acres of Bemis land from 1906 until 1908. The Barre Wool Combing Company acquired the property in 1908. A plot of 200' x 150' was sold to Dominic and Rose Izzi in 1953.

Since the tracks were at the door of the Bogue Place, it is believed that it was a drop and pickup stop for the train prior to the establishment of South Barre Post Office. The *Tax and Evaluation Book* listed Bogue Place which was later called the “dwelling at Barre Station.” According to Barre Wool personnel, the Bogue Place consisted of a dwelling and a four acre plot which the Barre Wool later acquired. Later the Combing Company sold only the small plot which contained the dwelling.

RICE VILLAGE

Most villages grew either because they were at the chosen center of the township in close proximity to the meeting house, the political and religious focus of the community, or because they were composed of dwellings gathered about an economic activity on a stream suitable to produce the necessary power. Rice Village, located about one and a half miles north of the common on Pleasant Street, Hawes Hill Road, and Mill Road, was an exception. When there is an exception to a rule, there is usually an impetus to discover why the deviation from the norm.

There were some reasons for the growth of Rice Village. First, it was located on one of the oldest through routes, Pleasant Street onto Hawes Hill, that passed westward through the three Swift River Valleys to the Connecticut Valley settlement of Deerfield.

It became a stopover point for travelers and drivers. As early as 1782, Isaac Tobey was granted a license to "deal in spirits" at a location in this village. Another license of similar nature was granted to Nathaniel Smith. We are uncertain of the exact location of Tobey's Inn, but Smith's was located on the grounds of the present Insight Meditation Center. "Deacon" Isaac Tobey is listed in 1792 as a member of school district #5 and was chosen as one of the committee delegated to "build a school house on land of Elijah Mann by the road a few rods north of Landlord Smith's watering place."

Probably the greatest asset of the area was the character of the settlers. In the mid-1700s, Captain Daniel Hawes arrived in the northwest quarter from Wrentham. He erected his home on the ledges of the hill that now bears his name. Nine children are recorded as being born to Daniel and Lois (Mann) Hawes. Many members of this large family settled in the area. They were all landowners and most were industrious farmers.

Jotham Rice, along with his cousin, a son of Jonas Rice, moved to the northwest quarter of Rutland prior to 1749. Jonas Rice is credited with being the founder of Worcester. These early Rices had many descendants. One of the family farms was located on the present site of the Insight Meditation Society. Here early in the nineteenth century, Charles Rice, a successful farmer, began the manufacture of carriages and wagons. The shop was on the west side of the road across from the homestead while the paint shop and other out buildings necessary to the trade were near the farmhouse.

Charles Rice was described by contemporaries as a man who had "fine taste and much energy." At the peak of his prosperity he employed twelve men in the wagon shop. He soon recognized the limitations of his location, in particular the lack of power to turn a lathe for making the hub and other parts of the wheels. He acquired land on the Prince River

near the road to Hubbardston and constructed dams and canals for a shop he built at that location. This later became the Heald Shop. The *Barre Gazette* in 1834 carried an advertisement for Rice's "Warranted Sleighs - \$18.00 each." Charles Rice died in 1854 at the age of 65.

A quarter of a mile to the south of Charles's establishment, his brother Earl was also involved in the wagon trade. His shop was at the old George Freeman Rice place, later known as Killingly Farm and currently owned by the Alexandrovich family. The shop was on the east side of the road with the blacksmith shop nearby. According to Matthew Walker, Earl Rice's wagons were of a poorer quality than his brother's. Although durable they were not as well made. However, he was reported to have been an outstanding salesman. He would hitch a team of horses to his wagon and start for Vermont or New Hampshire with a string of wagons tied behind the lead wagon. As cash was scarce, he would accept livestock or other salable goods and dispose of most of them on the way back. The cattle he acquired in this bartering process were brought home, fattened, and then driven over the roads to the Brighton livestock market.

When his son Larkin entered the business, he expanded his holdings, but the untimely death of Larkin at age 33 saw Earl Rice resume complete management of the business until his death in 1856.

Among the many acres of land obtained by the Rices was a portion of that eminence known as Hawes Hill. The Rice family quarried granite to be sold for curbing, house foundations, hitching posts, and construction material for dams and culverts. The stone work for the Barre Town House was billed to the Town of Barre in 1838 by Daniel H. Rice for "labor of myself for two days setting stone floor — \$2.50." Charles Rice was a member of the committee to build the town house, and on October 23, 1838, he also received from the town \$2.25 for "myself and team, one day, drawing door stones for Town House." The stone from Hawes Hill was surface quarried and evidence of this trade can still be seen in the North Park stone posts, Broad Street walls, and numerous foundation stones of buildings and homes near the Center. It is very likely that it is Hawes Hill stone that can be seen in the dams and retaining walls in the Heald Village area, as this work was done at the instigation of Charles Rice.

There were numerous Rice families, most of whom remained farmers. One, James Rice, who was also a blacksmith, amassed a large acreage close to the Petersham line at Rutland Brook Farm. According to *Richard's Atlas* of 1898, the farm had been in the family for 131 years and Rice was prominent as a dairyman and stock breeder.

The Rices achieved success and a contingent left for Conway, Massachusetts where they became pioneer settlers of that community. Others pushed on to Shelburne, Massachusetts and Wardsboro and

Bridgeton, Vermont, where they became active members of those communities.

An amusing incident occurred in November 1816, when Nathaniel Houghton, local magistrate, was requested to cite Jason Hawes on a date "it being the Lord's Day" for "travel journeying between the hours of three and five o'clock in the afternoon on the high road in the Town of Lancaster in violation of said day and against the Peace and Laws of the commonwealth." The complainant was Jotham Rice, and Hawes was fined \$2.00 by the Commonwealth for his action of "journeying on the Lord's Day." The unusual twist to the above incident was that the Rices and Hawes were closely connected by marriage in that Jotham, the complainant, had married Sally Hawes in January, 1805. He had turned in his father-in-law.

Just a short distance from the center of Rice Village, which could be considered the school house, there was Rutland Brook. About 1800, David Burt, who operated a farm on the Old Stage Road, built a dam and constructed a saw mill. He used a mulay saw and installed a machine for making shingles. He soon had a considerable number of customers. He continued until 1845 when he sold to Samuel Bassett. The Bassetts owned land and had a number of houses in the vicinity of Hawes Hill Road (Skelly Road). Samuel Bassett was a contracting carpenter and utilized the products of his own mill. After 1885 the mill changed hands several times, until Ernest A. Howard became the owner in 1891. Howard improved the property, put in a circular saw, a plane, and other woodworking machinery. In 1905 the mill became the property of James A. Rice.

For a short time Henry Rice, son of Charles, operated a steam-powered sawmill nearly opposite the site of his father's house. It was not too successful and was not in business for many years.

After the death of Charles and Earl Rice, some of their workers, David Burt, Jr., Isaac Osgood, and George M. Bassett, who had become skilled workers in the manufacture of wagons, all attempted to sell wagons. Without the organizational abilities of the Rices and their salesmanship, none of these men were able to sustain a business. Burt moved to the center and became a valued worker at Stephen Heald's shop. Bassett turned his skills to making ornamental boxes of various sizes, but within a few years was engaged as other members of his family in the carpentry trade and built several houses in the Pleasant and High Street area financed by Willard Broad.

About the turn of the century, James Rice began to buy many of the old Rice homesteads for the standing timber. In 1906 he sold much of the property he had acquired, including the old Charles or Lemuel Rice place, to Colonel William Gaston of Boston. Gaston also acquired the Earl Rice place, the water rights and Burt-Howard mill, and most of the



Colonel Gaston's Home, Rice Village

land along Baldwin Hill Road all the way to Skelly Road. He hired men to run a farm, improve walls, raze the mill, and do preventative maintenance on the dam. The buildings that remained, as well as fences and bar ways, were painted red. When the Charles Rice place burned in 1912, Gaston built a new, large brick mansion on the site.

Some years before, the location of the school house in the village was moved to the west side of the road opposite Hawes Hill Road. When the school was closed, the town sold it to the "Neighborhood Club of Rice Village." It was used as a community center for meetings. Four-H Clubs and other groups used it for years. The building was sold in 1968 to a young carpenter and his wife, Howard and Jinx Hastings, who converted it to a dwelling. It is still being used as a residence.

After Gaston's death, his heirs sold the property which had been divided into several parcels. The mansion became a rest home for awhile, and in 1946 it was sold to the Blessed Sacrament Fathers of Cleveland, Ohio who used it for many years as a novitiate. This was a two year period of intensive spiritual training. For those who were to be ordained priests, a two-year college degree was required. There were lay brothers who took care of the manual labor, cooking, secretarial, etc. After two years, the novices took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience which was "first profession." Those studying for the priesthood, the "clerics," then went to Cleveland, Ohio for studies in philosophy and theology and eventual ordination.

In 1976 the property was purchased by the Insight Meditation Society.



Rice Village Community School House

The meditation practice at IMS is a moment-to-moment investigation of the mind-body process through mindful awareness, which gradually enables the mind to see more clearly into itself. This inner exploration is done through the sitting-walking meditation practices, which are carried out in silence. Instruction and guidance are provided by the teachers of each course. The Insight Meditation Society is internationally known.

In the 1874 Centennial Book fourteen Rices were listed who had held town office in the first hundred years. At one time nearly every



Blessed Sacrament, now the Insight Meditation Society

home in the area belonged to a Rice or a Rice in-law as neighbors married neighbors.

Colonel Gaston's systematic absorption of the whole area effectively changed the character of the village. Only a few old buildings remain, and it is difficult to visualize the bustle of Rice Village one hundred years ago.

PRINCE RIVER

The Prince River bisects the Town of Barre from north to south. The location of the river, rather than the waterflow, made it an important area for business. Sixteen dams, numerous mills and shops, were located along the river. One of the northern most sites was used by the brothers Paul and Benjamin Rice. Their scythe factory was in a remote area of the Prince River Valley, just south of where the river crosses Skelly Road. Paul Rice chose to move his enterprise downstream to what would become Heald Village. It is believed that Benjamin never left the old site where he hammered out the heels of scythes by hand.

At various times, several sawmills existed between the original Rice site and Ryder or Mill Village. This small settlement was near the location of the present Charles G. Allen Company and a short distance upstream from Heald Village. Various shops and homes were clustered around the few mills that were present there.

Behind the present Charles G. Allen Company was W.F. Tay's Ice House. Ice was an important item to the merchant, farmer, and house-



Tay's Pond, ice cutting

wife. Ice was cut on ponds by marking and cutting it into large cakes, which were then raised to the ice house and packed in sawdust. It was certainly a handy location for such a business to be so close to a sawmill.

In 1840, at the site of the Charles G. Allen Company, there existed a sawmill, which was acquired by Daniel H. Rice in 1850. After Rice's death in 1863, the property was sold to Alvah D. Adams. Alvah was a carpenter and builder of many of the houses in town. He sold the mill to John W. Corbin. In 1865, it was sold to Alfred Holden.

The disastrous flood in 1868, caused by the breaching of the dam at the Old Reservoir (this reservoir was not for drinking water but for the control of the flow of the river further up the river) nearly destroyed every dam and mill along the Prince River Valley. On Saturday, September 26, 1868, at 2:00 AM, nine mill dams, six bridges, five mills, along with shops, outbuildings and parts of mills within a distance of two miles were carried away by the waters when the dam on the old reservoir burst. Many owners never recovered from the loss.

Alfred Holden suffered great loss in property during the flood of 1868, but the dam was rebuilt and the mill repaired, whereupon the business was sold to Charles Bacon. Holden purchased a mill at Barre Plains and moved there. Bacon sold the mill to his son-in-law, Charles G. Allen, who, along with being a farmer, was an agent for several agricultural implements.

In 1873, Mr. Allen founded the Charles G. Allen Company, took on the Lufkin line of agricultural implements, and devised a new and improved hay rake with Lufkin. The Victor plough was a favorite of farmers. The Allen stone puller was also made at the plant.

Allen had a keen and perceptive mind and invented several items of great use to the farmer. He was prominent in town affairs. He married Lucy Robinson Bacon and sired eight children. They resided in Heald Village near the junction of Mechanic Street and Hubbardston Road. It was behind this house on the Prince River that Wallace Nutting portrayed the well known *A Barre Brook* which is a print in the possession of the Barre Historical Society. The picture was a gift of Miss Bertha Carpenter, owner of the Heald residence.

Harding Allen, eldest son, became associated with his father after attending business college at Poughkeepsie, New York. He was active in the life of the community. Two other sons of Charles G. Allen also took an active part in the business.

After the death of Charles G. Allen in 1896, the business was continued by his son Harding. Harding, in turn, was succeeded by his brother Charles G. Allen II. Some of the items advertised in 1891 as being manufactured by the Charles G. Allen Company were heating furnaces, ploughs, washing machines, corn sheller, spring wagons, wagon jacks, a pulverizing harrow, and the popular Yankee Hay Rake. The Hay Rake

won many premiums at local fairs.

After 1904, the manufacturing line of the company was largely that of Allen ball bearings and high speed drilling and tapping machines. After the death of Charles G. Allen II, the business was under the management of his son, Charles G. Allen III. Charles G. Allen IV remained as General Manager until 1990. The Allen Company has seen five generations of the family as management of the facility.

The company has made many additions to the original plant. It owns many of the old mill properties of the area, including those in Heald Village. Neatly kept buildings are painted red and are exceptionally well maintained. It is the only manufactory remaining in the Town of Barre.

On the west side of the Prince River, nearly opposite the present Charles G. Allen Company, a sash and blind shop was operated by David B. Makepeace and Henry Robinson. The shop was erected about 1840 and changed ownership several times before James Rider purchased it around 1859. Sherman R. Nye acquired part ownership of the Rider mill where he manufactured a hay rake. Others were involved in the marketing and financing of the enterprise. A large number of horse-drawn hay rakes were sold. The plant was assessed to Rider and Nye from 1858 to 1863. Nye later moved his rake business further downstream.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Daniel Rice was operator of the sawmill across the river on the east side. He purchased one-third of the water rights of the Rider Pond. In the flood of 1868, the entire sash and blind works were demolished and the dam partially destroyed. The remaining water rights and properties were in the possession of Alfred Holden, who had acquired the mill on the east side of the river.

Slightly downstream on the west side of the river, south of the present roadway, was an area commonly called "Knight's Mill." It was built about 1830 by Joseph Rider, principally as a lumber and shingle mill. It also served as a corn mill. About 1842 he sold it to James Holden, Jr., father of Alfred and James E. Holden. The mill was sold again, this time to Baxter Newel in 1851, who operated it until 1858. Alvah Adams became owner of the mill until 1862 when the mill and water rights were acquired by Luke L. Knight. Knight manufactured wood products, including razor strop woods. The 1868 flood destroyed the dam and roadway. The mill was displaced from its foundation. The dam was rebuilt, the mill repaired, and business resumed. Knight died in 1878, and his son succeeded him in the business.

On the 1878 *Beer's Atlas Business Listing*, "Luke L. Knight, Miller and Manufacturer of Razor Strop Woods plus Lumber Planing and Dressing done to order at Mill Village" was listed. The Knight Mill passed into other hands and is presently part of the property of the

Charles G. Allen Company. It is probably the oldest mill building still standing in Barre.

Below Knight's Mill, but on the opposite side of the road, was the small new shop of Sherman R. Nye where he manufactured his hay rake. The *Beer's Atlas* listed Sherman R. Nye as manufacturer of the "Bay State Rake." The rake manufactory was transferred to other parties. In the 1868 flood, the shop was washed away and never rebuilt.

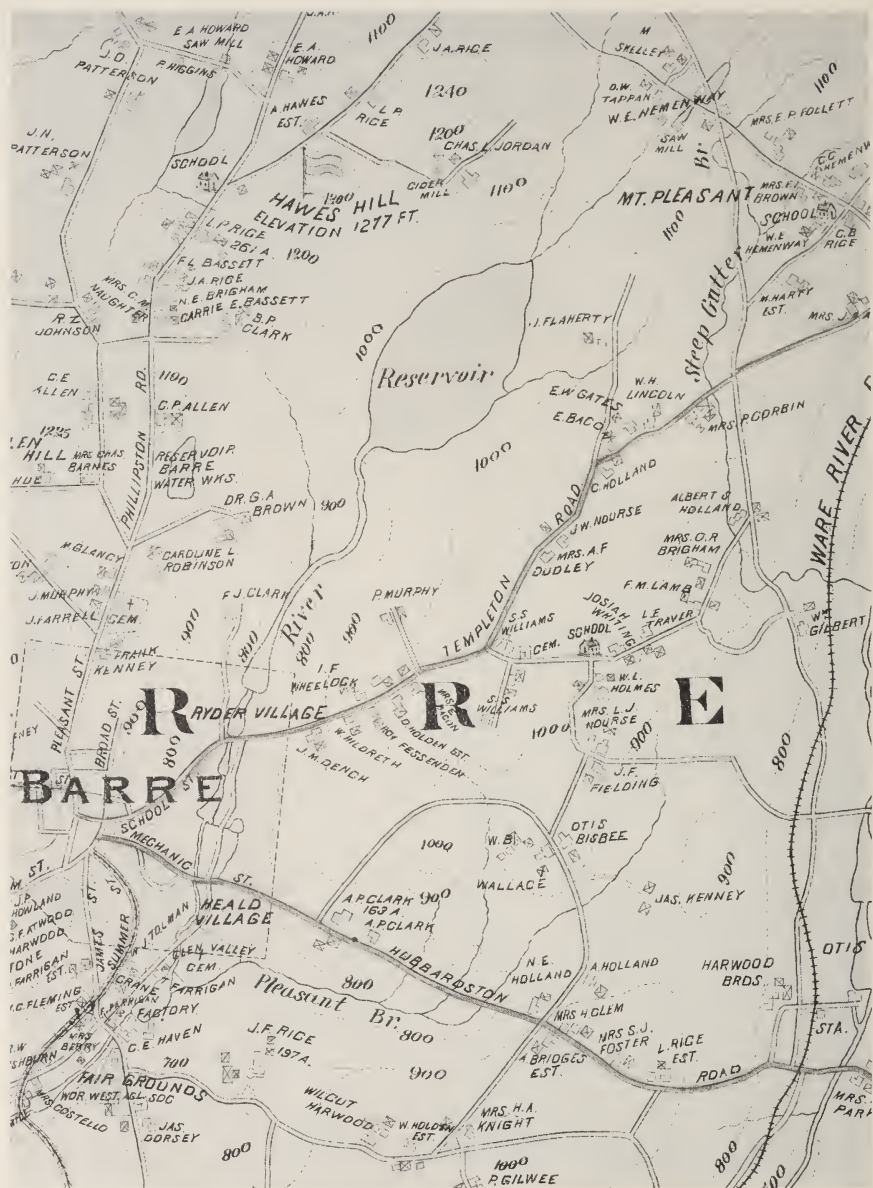
According to Matthew Walker, in 1830 Benjamin Ryder erected a sawmill and carriage wheel shop on the east side of Prince River, a short distance below the School Street bridge. Joseph Ryder and Benjamin Jenkins succeeded him and managed the business for many years. In 1858, an article appeared in the local paper that a small fire had been extinguished in the shavings in the Jenkins shop where wagon parts were made. Jenkins was a wheelmaker. He sold the business in 1865 to Henry Wilkins who continued to build wagons.

Willard B. and William Fessenden, Civil War veterans, purchased the Wilkins site after the flood of 1868. They repaired the dam and foundations and prepared to set up a new shop in which they installed a circular saw. This site was listed to L. Stone in 1870 and to F.J. Clark in 1898. Both men operated sawmills. The mill later changed hands several times. A few proprietors were successful, but others lost their businesses due to foreclosures.

The Panaccione brothers purchased the sawmill in 1921. They operated a saw and plane mill until the flood which was caused by the hurricane of 1938. Their dam and mill structure were destroyed. The property remained in the Panaccione name until 1963.

Below the Panaccione Brothers Sawmill was another huge earth and stone dam which was built by Charles Rice in the early 1800s. This was for furnishing power for his wagon parts manufacturing business. The water from the pond was diverted by canal under Valley Road to a reservoir across the street. Another large stonework dam was constructed, which diverted water by canal to what was to become the Heald foundry and shop. The canal again crossed under Valley Road and discharged into the Prince River at a short distance upstream from the Mechanic Street bridge. Much of the stonework of that enterprise is still visible, but the canals and the pond beds have been filled.

According to Matthew Walker, "as early as 1812 there was a sawmill on the east side of the Prince River near the present bridge at Heald Village." It is probable that this was the same area that William Buckminster deeded to his son John in 1786: "...a plot containing seventy-four acres of land with a sawmill thereon in the north part of Great Farm #16 on the Prince River." In 1812, the mill also contained facilities for crushing flax seed and making it into linseed oil, a vital item in the making of paint.



Prince River/Heald, Mill/Ryder Village

On the south side of the road to Hubbardston, on the west bank of the Prince River, there was a shop built by Ezekiel L. Pierce and Paul Rice. After a time, Rice and Pierce dissolved their partnership, and Paul Rice built a scythe shop on the north side of the highway. Although he

moved his triphammer and waterwheel to the new location, he still retained a financial interest in the Pierce sawmill.

In 1825, Charles Rice moved his established wagon manufactory from Rice Village to the Prince River Valley. He constructed a dam, a series of canals, and a small shop on the east side of the river, near the Paul Rice shop. There, he continued to make high quality wagons, buggies, and even hearses. His wagons were much in demand and the quality of his workmanship was continued until he died in 1854.

One of Charles Rice's former apprentices, Cyrus Atwood, started a wagon business of his own about 1840 and continued until 1862 in a two-story shop which he erected near the southeast corner of Hubbardston Road and the present Valley Road. He employed many hands, turning out parts as well as finished wagons.

Another wagon artisan, Lorenzo Harding, located another small shop east of the Atwood plant, turning the intersection into a wagon manufacturing center.

One of the young workers hired by Charles Rice was Stephen Heald from Hubbardston. He became a power lathe operator but soon was making parts that could be classified as foundry items. He was sharing the shop as he concentrated on metal production. After the death of Rice, he continued the shop and advertised axes, pulleys, sleighs, and wagons. He sharpened saws and gradually expanded his inventory to include cheese presses, hat blocks, corn cob crushers, wood shingles, hay tedders, stoves, and foundry and machine shop items. Not stopping there, from later advertisements we learn that he added other agricultural items and wire drawing equipment. The building suffered two fires, the first caused some damage and was soon repaired. The second fire, in 1850, destroyed the entire property which included machinery, tools and all. There can be no doubt about the wishes of the town to keep Stephen Heald in town, as the Moderator at a town meeting appointed a committee to collect donations to be given to Heald. The shop was rebuilt and business resumed.

In 1865 Stephen Heald's two sons joined their father in the business. One of them soon withdrew, but the other, Leander Heald, built a residence on the steeps of Mechanic Street overlooking the mill, which is currently still a residence. Among the products successfully made during his tenure were the Bullard hay tedder, circular sawmills, planing machines, wire making equipment, and wood working machinery. Near the turn of the century, Leander's son, James R. Heald, joined the company. At this time nearly all the Healds lived within the area. James Heald, however, concerned with the future of the company, felt that it had to be near rail service and a larger market, and accordingly, in 1903, he moved the company operations to Worcester. Several members of the family moved also, and the old buildings became the property of the

Charles G. Allen Company. The Allens were connected to the Healds by marriage.

By 1869 the Healds had obtained the Atwood shop and home and used the property for twenty years. The Atwood residence later became the home of Matthew Walker and his wife, a daughter of Stephen Heald. It is now the home of George and Sylvia Mennard.

Fairly early in the century there was a Gorham Hat Pressing establishment in the environs of Heald Village nearly opposite the present Glen Valley Cemetery. Here, Dexter Dennis and Sanford D. Smith joined forces to establish a hat pressing and box manufacturing business in the 1850s. Dennis and Smith were brothers-in-law, each having married a Brigham girl. After a while, Smith withdrew from the partnership, but Dennis continued to expand his inventory, adding several buildings, some on each side of the road. Hats and hat boxes for shipping were manufactured, and powder kegs were also made.

After the disastrous flood, Dexter Dennis rebuilt, and in the *Beer's Atlas* of 1870, he is listed as operating a steam mill and box factory with a storehouse in his name. He improved the hat pressing process but after a few years (in 1870) moved his business to Palmer, Massachusetts and eventually to South Norwalk, Connecticut.

Further removed, and certainly not part of Heald Village, but located on the Prince River, was a factory making palm leaf hats. Operated for a time by the Desper family, and then by Rogers and Osgood. It was listed in the 1890s as a "straw goods manufactory." It was located on a sizeable mill pond, which for a period of time contained a small steam boat for the amusement of residents. The plant was located where the gravel pit is now on Old Coldbrook Road.

Another business, of a different nature, was developed in Heald Village, a short way up Mechanic Street. Several farmers grouped together just prior to 1865, and established the Barre Central Cheese Company, where surplus milk could be utilized. Progress reports in the local paper announced that the erection of a building near Heald Village was rapid, and in the June 16, 1865 issue the public was informed that "the manufacture of cheese began the first of the week," and the result was eight cheeses at 85 pounds each.

This cheese company, one of three in town, continued to exist for over three decades. Hogs were kept at the rear of the building, fattened on the whey or wastes of the cheese-making process, and marketed in the fall of each year. The factory was supplied with excellent water from a nearby spring, and an apartment in the front of the building housed the manager and his family. Many cheeses were shipped out of town. Several cheeses were exhibited at the Barre Cattle Show and other nearby fairs, often winning prizes.

The Barre Central Cheese Company ceased to operate about 1900,

and the property was disposed. The building is still standing and is the residence of Stanley and Adele Mertzic.

There were, prior to 1868, nine dams on the Prince River between the present Route 122 bridge and the Charles G. Allen Company dam. Shops and mills along the river produced lumber, finished wood work, razor strop woods, agricultural implements such as ploughs, stonepullers, hay rakes, hay tedders, linseed oil, grist from grain processing, powder kegs, wooden boxes, palm leaf hats, wagons and wagon parts, sleighs, hearses, scythes, foundry and machine products, waterwheels, hat blocks, wood shingles, stoves, circular saws, and wire drawing machinery.

Many of these were destroyed in the flood of 1868, and a variety of factors caused the decline of the others. The failure of the railroad to come to the foot of Summer Street was a striking blow to the industries along the Prince River. Products had to be hauled a considerable distance to either Barre Station, which was located near the entrance to the present landfill area or to the Barre Plains Station. This haulage was time consuming and expensive. There was no main road to the area, and it was many years before the roads were hard topped. Even then, cars and trucks found it difficult to overcome the elevations of hill towns. Another factor was the installation of electric power lines, which crisscrossed the countryside and made it unnecessary to depend on water power. Manufacturing plants could be located in areas that had never been under consideration that were safe from the ravages of floods.

There were many changes in ownership of the small industries along the Prince River that survived the flood of 1868, but the name of its most successful entrepreneur has remained and the small cluster of buildings near the junction of Mechanic Street, Hubbardston Road, and Valley Road, is still referred to as "Heald Village."

BARRE FOUR CORNERS

The story of Barre Four Corners is the story of settlement in the New England countryside and of the agrarian/artisan society in which goods were traded for services among neighbors. It is the story of immigration and exodus, of individuals and families, of prosperity and decline, of fires, and of resurrection.

The village of the Four Corners came into being in the northern tip of what would become the Town of Barre. It developed at the junction of two thoroughfares: the road leading north to Templeton and Phillipston, and the road leading from Petersham east to Hubbardston. Both of these roads were accepted as county roads in 1771 and 1772.

The Four Corners was also located close to the boundary of Great Farms No. 1 and No. 2 and had partitioned for settlement in 1735. The

terrain is high and rocky, the elevation is 1059 feet, and the view includes Mount Wachusett on the eastern horizon.

Near the Four Corners is a small stream rising out of the Thousand Acre Swamp, coursing down to Steep Gutter Brook, and emptying into the Burnshirt River. It was not large enough to provide the six to nine months' flow of water needed for prosperous mills that were only a half-mile to the west on the headwaters of the Prince River. The mills at the headwaters worked in concert with those at the Four Corners. Active at the headwater was the Adams/Holland saw and shingle mill and the Rice brothers' triphammer and scythe shop.

At Barre Four Corners, in the early nineteenth century, were Ethan Hemenway's triphammer shop, Cheney Lewis's cordwainer shop (called a ten by ten because of its size), and Alanson Green's carriage and blacksmith shop and store. There was also Moses Smith's Inn, No. 9 District School, and No. 9 Cemetery.

Prominent in the life of this village was the Hemenway family. Daniel Hemenway II arrived in the early 1770s from Shrewsbury, where his father, Daniel I, had built the Congregational Church. He had also built the Old South Church in Worcester, where City Hall is today. Daniel II and the generations of Hemenways to follow him would be housewrights in the environs of Barre Four Corners. They are remembered for a particular style of dwelling which was a one story Cape with an off-center chimney. There was always a large keeping room facing north, two rooms of unequal size facing south, and the roof ridge always parallel with the road, regardless of the floor plan. Some of these "Hemenway houses" remain today. However, the two Hemenway residences, those of Amos and his son Ethan and of Daniel II and III, (the Robert and Clare Barnes and the Wilbur Sirois residences), are large, commodious, two-story houses.

A grandfather clock on display in Woods Memorial Library attests of the craftsmanship of Daniel Hemenway II. It was given to the Barre Library Association by Ellen Cheney in memory of Daniel Hemenway III, who was her grandfather and the clockmaker's son.

Another name recalled in the context of the Four Corners is Smith. Moses Smith was an innkeeper. His inn was designated a "house of entertainment" in that he had no license to serve liquor but could provide meals and lodging for wayfarers.

In September, 1786, an event occurred that would put Barre Four Corners on the map forever. A group of angry farmers from Petersham and points west came marching along the road and stopped at Moses Smith's Inn for refreshment and rest. They were headed for Worcester where they intended to close the Court of Common Pleas. Many farmers who had fought in the American Revolution had returned home to find their properties heavily taxed and mortgaged. They did not have the

legal tender demanded by tax collectors and creditors. Their way of life was to barter goods for services. Many farmers were being taken to court and thrown into prison. "Close the courts" was the cry of the embattled farmers. Moses Smith was a public-spirited man. He was 36 years old and the father of seven children when he went to fight in the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775. He lost his gun in the battle and would appear twice the following year before the House of Representatives in Boston seeking redress. He had now served three terms as selectmen and six as assessor.

When the farmers left Moses Smith's Inn, he was with them. In front of the courthouse in Worcester, Judge Artemas Ward, his black silk robe rent by a bayonet, lectured to the angry farmers for two hours from the courthouse steps. The court adjourned to Patch's Tavern and convened there the following day, only to adjourn without action. Soon this uprising would take the name of "Shays' Rebellion." After the Revolution, every town was required to have its own stock of ammunition. In Barre, the guns and powder were stored in the barn of Major David Fisk on James Street. One day the selectmen discovered that the ammunition was gone. On November 27, 1786, a committee of nine was chosen to search for the "ammunition taken without leave from the selectmen." The first name on the list of searchers was Lt. Moses Smith. Another name was Lt. Richard Mills. Tradition has it that these two men were instrumental in spiriting the ammunition off to the barn of Joseph Smith (not a close relative), where it was found early in December. There were many entries in the town clerk's records about payment of the committee for services rendered and concluding with this one in July, 1787: "Voted not to act on payment of cost of hunting ammunition. Protest entered against meeting and against Lt. Moses Smith, moderator, his having been member of Capt. Shays' army in late rebellion and taken no oath." It was signed by 14 persons.

Smith resigned, and "after considerable altercations among inhabitants of said town, then assembled, said inhabitants dismissed without passing any other vote upon the articles contained in foregoing warrant, leaving the selectmen and town clerk in said meeting house without one inhabitant of said town with them, said selectmen and town clerk after waiting till the dusk of evening, retired. Henry Brigham, Abijah Harding, William Caldwell III, selectmen." Smith seems to have suffered no permanent censure for his part in Shays' Rebellion. He was selectmen again in 1788, serving every year through 1792, and again in 1800 and 1801. He was assessor for 13 years after Shays' Rebellion, town clerk for three years, and town treasurer in 1792. He was on the school districting committee in 1790, on the committee to secure the division of the county in 1796, and in 1797 he sold to the town the land on which No. 9 District School would be built. He was on the school



Bixby House

committee in 1811 and 1812. Local historian Matthew Walker wrote that he was a man who loved his family and his home. He and his wife Lydia eventually had ten children. When she died in 1812, he was already in ill health. He lived three years beyond her, and by all accounts lies beside her in No. 9 Cemetery on Barre Four Corners. The mystery remains of why no one ever erected a tombstone in his memory beside her stone.

Emerson Bixby was a blacksmith who lived on Barre Four Corners for about fifty years. He opened his account book in 1824 and kept records of his trading transactions for 31 years. His work peaked in the 1830s. As his account book became more sparse of entries, it may have been that he was dealing more in cash. The agrarian/artisan way of life was waning. The industrial revolution was coming to New England. The Panic of 1837 forced some artisans, like Ethan Hemenway, into bankruptcy, not so for the more conservative Emerson Bixby. In 1826 he had bought one of the small Cape houses built by the Hemenways, and there he and his wife Laura (Doane) of Royalston would raise three daughters and live out their years. He first worked for Alanson Green, and then established his own blacksmith shop across the road. His account books are at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester.

The early settlers were farmers as well as artisans. Their wives and families played an integral part in reaping an adequate living within the confines of the neighborhood. In 1826 Laura Bixby was engaged "to bind 91 pare of shoes" for Cheney Lewis. Bits of straw found in recent years between the floorboards of the Bixby house are clues that she also braided straw for local hat shops. In the 1850s the Bixby household produced 200 pounds of butter and 200 pounds of cheese yearly. Emerson Bixby died in 1870, and Laura died in 1879. Thereafter, their house sat by the side of the road and was used as a summer home by their daugh-

ters and their descendants for almost a century.

In 1853 two Irish names appeared on the account books of Emerson Bixby. Irish immigrants had been moving into the environs of Barre Four Corners and had established enclaves to the north and west. Soon children with names of McCormick, Lemay, Skelley, Harty, and Tappin were attending school at No. 9 District School on Barre Four Corners. There was many a tussle in the schoolyard as Irish lads vied for position with the entrenched English students. The Irish also brought with them their traditional sense of humor. Jim Skelley was hiding behind his desktop and was eating a piece of pie one day when the teacher called, "Put that pie away, James." "I am putting it away as fast as I can," Jim retorted.

Alexander Gregory Williams, who grew up in the neighborhood after his widowed mother married Nathan Woods, wrote in later years of the new road built in 1867 from Barre to Templeton. "We boarded the help when the road was built, about fifteen men, mostly Irish men. They slept on mattresses on the floor and I had to make the beds." This new road bypassed Barre Four Corners and enhanced the position of Williamsville, in the Burnshirt Valley, just over the line in Hubbardston. A box shop, chair factory, and later, a beeswax factory, made that village a bustling community. A railroad would also be built, and beginning in the early 1870s trains would come through the valley from Palmer to Winchendon and a stop in Williamsville.

Two third-generation Hemenways were active in the life of Barre Four Corners in the second half of the 19th century. Willard Earle Hemenway had bought Sewall Holland's sawmill on the Prince River. After 1850 he built a two story carpentry and carriage shop on Barre Four Corners next to Emerson Bixby's blacksmith shop. Bixby ironed wagons for him.

Hemenway bought the farmstead of Eber Smith and some of Moses Smith's land. Where a little house had stood, he built a large, two-story house with ell and attached barn. Upstairs in the ell he made a dance hall with spring floor. It became the place for young people from miles around to gather. Many a match was made at the Hemenway dance hall.

Willard Earle Hemenway died in 1907 at the age of eighty-two when he went out one morning to open the barn door, and it fell on him.

For a few years thereafter, an Irishman, Jack Hurley, owned the farm and held dances until a great conflagration leveled the complex of buildings. It remained a cellar hole until recent years.

Willard's brother, Chauncy Columbus Hemenway, was, according to one of his daughters, more like the Earles of Hubbardston (his mother's family), "the first one in the family to go away to school." After attending No. 9 District School on Barre Four Corners, he enrolled at New Salem Academy in New Salem, Massachusetts and transferred to Barre

Academy the first year that it was opened. He came back to teach at No. 9 School and was also a veterinarian. He often had to leave school for a day to tend to sick or injured animals. A.G. Williams wrote that he was "often away doctoring cows and horses; the big boys, Willard Brown, Ed Babbitt, the Lemay boys and myself, liked to have Emma Brown, who lived at the Hemenways, substitute for him." A daughter wrote, "Father was the most educated man in that part of town and was called on by neighbors and friends to help figure taxes and interest."

He married Sarah Elizabeth Parker, November 12, 1862. She had been born in Brooklyn, New York, but came to live with her aunt and uncle, Betsy and Cheney Lewis, on Barre Four Corners. He was 32 when he married her on her nineteenth birthday. They had eleven children, of whom six lived to maturity.

One morning in March, 1901, he got up early, started a fire in the woodstove, and went back to bed. Soon the house was ablaze from an overheated pipe or faulty chimney. Chauncy, his wife, and two young girls staying at the house had to escape in their night clothes and bare feet. Chauncy and Sarah went to live with a daughter in Worcester. At the time of his death in 1910, it was noted that he was the oldest graduate of Barre Academy or Barre High School.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, most of the descendants of the earliest settlers had moved to more prosperous lives in the cities, to Vermont, or west to farms without rocks. After a generation or two, the



Bixby House as situated at Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA

Irish families moved to Gardner where work in factories was plentiful.

Of the Irish families, only the Hartys remain to this day. Martin W. Harty, who was raised in the Irish enclave on White Hill to the north in Phillipston, married Margaret Buckley, an Irish immigrant. They bought the Nathan Woodis farm in 1882. Kate McMullan, in her thesis, "Maggie," wrote in 1985:

"On their arrival, Martin W. immediately plunged into farming full-time. He raised corn, potatoes and forage for the animals. Over the next few years he started to build up a dairy herd, set out an apple orchard, sugared and logged in season. He remained involved in raising animals for resale, and in a little horse trading. Maggie had chickens and a kitchen garden to care for as well as the house and children. In the years which followed, the farm prospered. Martin cleared additional pasture and began to plan for the barn he would build in 1890. He had twenty-five acres planted to timothy and clover, one to potatoes, and two to corn. He had ten milk cows now, five calves, and several heifers. Katy started school. Soon two children, then three, were walking down the lane across the fields to the No. 9 School on Barre Four Corners."

But tragedy struck. At the age of eleven, Katy died of spinal cerebral meningitis on Christmas Eve, 1888. In July 1890, William Rufus, aged two, would die of the same disease. In July 1894, Martin was kicked by a horse and died five days later of peritonitis. Maggie was suddenly left with three half-grown sons: Thomas Augustus, John Francis, and Martin Christopher and a daughter, Margaret Theresa. With the help of her children, Maggie continued the farm work until her death in 1911. After his marriage, Martin Christopher, her youngest son, and his wife, Annie B. (Cummings), came to the farm and raised their five children at the farm. Martin worked the farm while he worked full-time at the Charles G. Allen Company foundry. Today his youngest son, John, lives on the farm and sells tools from the barn.

In the late nineteenth century the Daniel Hemenway farm was used as a summer residence by the family. After the turn of the century Mr. Bowdlear, owner of the beeswax factory in Williamsville, bought the property and used it as his summer home. Then three Finnish families moved into the neighborhood: Daniel Johnson bought the Daniel Hemenway farm, August Sundberg purchased the Adams/Holland farm on the Prince River, and Matti Mannisto acquired the Moses Smith farm. Their children did not stay to raise their families here.

The name Frank S. Cummings has been synonymous with Barre

Four Corners for over sixty years. Frank S. Cummings, Sr., bought the Mannisto farm in 1928. The house had burned. Two large barns beckoned, and he built his house on the old foundation. Then, when a lantern tipped over, he lost his two barns. He built a new barn and for a time held Saturday night barn dances in it. Shades of the old Hemenway dance hall! He and his son Frank, Jr., would be school bus operators, and the fleet of big yellow buses would be a paradigm of how the world had changed since children walked to school at No. 9 School on Barre Four Corners.

No. 9 School had closed in the 1890s, and children went back to No. 4 School, about three miles away from the Corners. That too closed in 1930. No. 9 School became a dwelling and later unoccupied. It burned in later years.

Beginning in 1970, a series of events would make blacksmith Emerson Bixby perhaps the most famous person to have lived on Barre Four Corners. The house was vandalized. In order to preserve what was left, a descendant, Stephen A. Derby of Hawaii, gave Old Sturbridge Village the furnishings of the house many of which had been there since Emerson and Laura Bixby had called the house home. Later the property was deeded to Old Sturbridge Village. Archaeologists and historical researchers from the Village brought students to Barre Four Corners for several summers of intensive study of the house, the surrounding areas of the homestead, and the blacksmith shop across the road. The culmination of this project was in 1986 with the move of the Bixby house to Old Sturbridge Village. There, beginning in 1988, it would be visited in one summer by more people than had stepped inside the door in all its years of existence in Barre. Once again "Emerson and Laura" would greet guests and carry on their tasks as of yore. For the Bixby house, the past would become the future.

Village researchers conducted a computer-enhanced analysis of Emerson Bixby's account books and also did an architectural study of old houses in the Barre Four Corners neighborhood and the environs. Papers, on aspects of their research, were presented in places as distant as Savannah, Georgia and Salt Lake City, Utah. Soil from the blacksmith shop went to Canada for testing.

Meanwhile, back at Barre Four Corners, where there had been few changes for years, new houses were being built and "new" people were moving into the neighborhood. Barre Four Corners awaits the future.



Williams Hall



Barre Historical Society



Williams/Kilner House moved from the site of the Barre Hotel, 1800's



Barre Town Common 1951



Barre Bakery Wagon



Corner of Mechanic Street and "Cat Alley"



Barre 1992



Barre 1992

TRADE, INDUSTRY, AND BUSINESS



THE MAN WHO TILLS THE SOIL

The first issue of the *Farmer's Gazette*, forerunner of the *Barre Gazette* that was published on May 23, 1834, featured the first two lines of a poem called *The Farmer* by Peter Hayloft.

“Oh happy, blest of all his race,
The man who tills the soil”

In Barre, farming was necessary in order to exist. It was the lure of agricultural land that enticed the settler to move westward and settle the area.

In surveys of the Northwest Quarter of Rutland in 1733 and 1734, the land was divided into small and great farms. These farms were the major land use of that time. Prime lands along the rivers were claimed early. The rolling and uneven lands under forest cover were second choice. Settlers selected those lands which were most accessible by waterway or foot path. The paths eventually became country or village roads and some of these roads eventually became the “improved” roads and highways.

Nearly everyone in the early settlement was involved in some type of agriculture. Town records reported such duties listed in 1763 as “Clerk of Market and Surveyor of Wheat and Flour.” This post was filled annually at the town meeting. In 1772, the office had become known as “Clerk of the Market Sealer of Weights and Measures.” A version of the position stills exists. The town offices of Deer Reeve, Hog Reeve, Sealer of Shingles and Clapboards, Hayward, Surveyor of Flax and Hemp, and Packer of Beef and Pork were filled annually. Many of the older offices of Pound Keeper, Fence Viewer, Field Driver, and Measurer of Bark and Manure continued to appear in the Annual Town Report through 1970.

In 1791 because of damage to farmers’ crops by a perennial pesky bird, it was voted to pay a bounty of “one shilling on heads of crows which may be killed by the inhabitant of said town for years ensuing.” That regulation was to be enforced by the Town Clerk. Captain Joel Bent, as Town Clerk, was appointed the person to receive “said crow’s heads” for six years. The statute was repealed in 1798 as the crow problem had



apparently been solved. The problem must have reappeared, for in 1817 the town voted to grant a bounty of 17 cents on each crow's head.

Although everyone farmed, some evidently were not successful, as yearly articles were voted which restricted the "horses and swine from running at large." In 1803, the village had become populous enough so that stray animals created a considerable problem, and lost or strayed cattle, sheep, horses, and swine were often found and impounded. The impounded animals were advertised, the owner had to identify his errant livestock, and pay damages to the Keeper of the Pound before he could officially claim the animal and return it to the home pastures.

The post of "Fence Viewer" was created to make the final judgment over the disputed boundary lines and to order proper fence construction to prevent strays from becoming a continual nuisance to neighbors.

After the Revolutionary War and the political upheaval that resulted, farmers found themselves in a bind. With much of the manpower at war for so long, farms suffered severely. Many of the farms were beyond redemption. Money was lacking and times were difficult. Prices had become so low for farm products that farmers were unable to pay off debts while they were serving in the military, and taxes became almost impossible for many. In several communities of western Massachusetts, farmers banded together to march on the court houses to impede the loss of these farms through the legal process. This group had as its leader Daniel Shays of Pelham. Their uprising became known as Shays Rebellion.

Failure to meet mortgages caused many to lose their farms, as the *Chattel Mortgage Book* of the early 1800s and mid-1800s clearly showed. It was a common occurrence when cash was needed for payment of taxes, mortgages, or unforeseen emergencies to use one's tools of trade for collateral. For the farmer it was his personal property, such as the "red oxen, black or bay mare, winnowing mill, wood saw, wheelbarrow, swarm of bees, side hill plough, hay and grain, pleasure or work wagon, straw cutter, jumper sleigh, draft chain, spring calf, swine, buffalo robe, harrow, crowbar, cheese, pitchforks, rakes, bells, and blankets" or nearly any type of farm crop, equipment, or animal that became the property of the mortgagee.

In 1839, Timothy Hinkley took out a mortgage for \$616.07 and put for collateral "two horses, four oxen, four cows, seven heifers, four steers, one bull, two calves, eleven sheep, one cook stove, one clock, one cart, two sleds, and two swine." In 1849, Thomas Woodis took a mortgage for \$79.00 on his "cattle, horse and harness, buffalo robe, wagon, plow, harrow, chain and crow bar, one hunting gun, plus all hay and grain."

Nearly every phase of town activity centered around the farm. It determined where the schools were to be located and where roads were to be built. In the early part of the nineteenth century, "more than ninety percent of all New Englanders were farmers" according to Catherine Fennelly's *Life in An Old New England Village*. In the First Parish Assessment books of the early 1800s, land owners of Barre were assessed one rate for cleared and developed land and a lesser rate for undeveloped land. Children of poor and indigent parents were indentured to prosperous and dependable farmers whose duty it was to teach the male child "the art, trade and mystery of husbandry" along with providing him with proper schooling, 2 suits of clothes, and \$50.00 at the completion of his apprenticeship at the age of twenty-one years. A female child would be apprenticed until the age of eighteen." She was to be taught the "art and mystery of a spinster (one who spins) and all other good house keeping, as well as schooling plus the two good suits of apparel for all parts of her body, one for the Lord's Day and the other for working days," but no money was mentioned in her indenture.

The day of a farmer was a hard and long one. He was awake at day-break to feed and tend animals, do chores, and start the various activities of farming composed of clearing land, ploughing, cultivating crops, haying, harvesting crops, shearing sheep, butchering, and preparing fields for winter crops. Winter was usually the time spent in repairing buildings and walls. Tools and implements were sharpened and repaired in the farm shop. Wood was cut, hauled and stacked to age for use the following year.

Logging operations were practiced in winter, since it was easier to

snake out logs on snow or frozen ground. The logs were taken to the mill and sawed into boards for use either on the farm or for sale as a "cash crop" to cover the taxes or farm maintenance. Excess farm products were traded at the local stores for items necessary to the farm family or for credit toward items already purchased.

A man's role on the farm was that of general farm manager, while a woman's work was more varied and often longer and even more tedious. Not only was she wife and mother to many children, as was the custom, but she was cook, nurse, churner, ironer, launderer, mender, baker, seamstress, spinster, weaver, and preserver. Prior to the early 1800s, nearly all cooking and baking was done in the fireplace, for stoves were not common until the mid-1800s. The woman also served as an extra hand at haying and harvesting time as well as tending the house garden. Wax candles were the source of light in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and candles had to be made from fats saved for that purpose. The farm wife even made her own soap.

Farm children were expected to assist at chores. The boys helped the father at the farm work, and the girls helped in the house, each child learning the many jobs expected of them as they grew to adults. Children attended district schools, but attendance was highest in winter when farm chores were lightest.

Farm life was not all drudgery. It had its brighter moments as recorded in 1815 in the diary of Lucius Spooner. On the second day of his record, he went to Mr. Paige's in Hardwick where he met a "collection of people a hunting for turkeys for there had been a shooting at turkeys in the forepart of the day." On the 10th of January, he went to a party "and set out for home half past twelve in the rain." Throughout his diary there were gatherings and parties of all kinds such as: "cleaned the gun and went a hunting" or "went a fishing after dinner, but we had the luck of a fisherman - a wet skin and a hungry gut." Another instance found him going after cherries, and he was unable to go to work the following day. Another entry recorded that he took his girl to the circus at Templeton to see the "lions and tygers."

In the fall of the year, after the corn had been harvested, dried, and stored in the barn, it had to be husked. The ears of corn were then stored for winter feed for livestock. Often this chore was turned into a social gathering or "husking" where neighbors and friends assembled to husk corn. Youthful farmers found this a favorite pastime because the person who found the red ear of corn while husking had the opportunity of selecting his or her favorite on whom to bestow a kiss. After the corn was husked, the fiddler would play dance tunes and delectable repasts were enjoyed until the wee hours of the morning.

Alice Roper, born in 1882, lived on the old Brigham Farm in the east part of town. She reported that as a girl she remembered on Sunday

mornings the line of buggies or wagons carrying the farm families to church in Barre Center. She said that the children were excited and thrilled to go to church for it was the only time the children got to town. Not only were they able to see new faces, but after Sunday School they all would harness the horses for the return trip to the farm. According to Alice, it was for this reason that the area along the Williamsville Road and east part of town became known as "Christian Hill." The Christians had traveled this road for church.

As rum had been a popular commodity in the early life of the villagers, so too did cider play an important role. A number of farmers, perhaps four or five at any one time, had cider mills which they used to crush apples into pomace and a press for squeezing "must" or apple juice from the pomace. The term "cider," as used in the nineteenth century and earlier, implies the fermented juice of apples which usually had an alcoholic content of from four to eight percent. Farmers owning cider mills ordinarily allowed neighbors to use them for a fee or on some sort of barter basis. Cider was stored in hardwood barrels in farmhouse cellars (except in temperate households) and was a major beverage in many families.

The rise of manufacturing offered a new opportunity to the youth on the farm in the early and mid-1800s. Chances for a shorter day and greater profit beckoned them to the shops and mills. Western lands enticed farmers to shun the rocky soil of New England for the flat fertile lands of the west, so local farms were often abandoned and left to decay. The "big blow" of September 1815 and the continual chill of 1816 caused a great loss to farmers. Timber and crops were ruined two years in a row. Many farmers felt that the western lands could not be any more of a gamble and so they moved in that direction.

By 1820, the total population of Barre was 2,077. Three hundred and twenty-two of those persons were engaged in agriculture. Homes were built which housed "merchants, artisans, and professionals" near the centers and where the shops and mills had been built. Still each family had their small farm from which most of their food was obtained. Commercial villages emerged along the rivers and major transportation routes where the workers worked, thus providing new markets for the farmer. Shops which manufactured agricultural implements and articles were erected in several parts of the town.

Most of the farms remained on the outskirts of the villages or in the outlying areas. From 1846 to 1850, farmers in Barre marketed at one of the town's stores 2,754,664 pounds of cheese and 539,998 pounds of pork. Livestock raising and dairy farming were the most popular types of farming. The by-products of milk, cheese, beef, and pork were sent to the city markets.

In the mid-1800s cheese factories were built by groups of farmers



The Allen/Carter-Stevens Farm, what was once the highest cultivated piece of land, east of the Mississippi, early 1900s

who organized themselves into associations. There were three of these cheese factories in Barre. One factory was on Chamberlain Hill Road in Barre Plains, one on the Hinkley farm on Spring Hill Road, and one on Circle Street which was just off “the steeps” of Mechanic Street. The members of the association selected a manager who oversaw the operation of the cheese factory. Farmers brought their excess milk to the small factory where the cheese process produced at least two products. One product was the cheese, and the other was the marketing of the numerous hogs which fed off the whey and wastes from the cheese-making process. The cheeses were distributed to local markets and sent by train to the Boston market.

By 1900, all three cheese factories were no longer in existence because improved railroad transportation made the selling of milk to urban markets more profitable than the manufacturing of cheese. The cheese factory buildings were sold. All of the buildings were made into private dwellings.

In the 1840s and 50s, agricultural societies were being formed throughout the state. In 1851, the Worcester West Agricultural Society was established and chartered by Barre farmers and those in neighboring towns. Originally the society held their fair or cattle show on the common, but the closed streets caused litigation and hard feelings. Part of the Jason Desper farm (now Felton Field) was purchased, and fair grounds were constructed. The first fair or cattle show was held at the new site in 1865. Farmers exhibited their best produce and breeds of livestock. They vied with each other for prizes or to be listed in the Premium List. Local, state, and national celebrities addressed the crowd. Woodrow Wilson was the guest of the show management in 1912 which

caused quite a flurry of excitement at the time. Premiums were offered in nearly every kind of handicraft, food, and garden produce. Ladies competed for ribbons by showing their quilts and canned goods. Horses raced on the half-mile oval track where many bets and wagers were made on the side.

The Joel B. and Augusta (Atwood) Hinkley diaries record the various trials and tribulations in the life of a farmer in the mid-1800s. Joel worked as a farmer, and he assisted at burials of nearly all his neighbors. Augusta, in her spare time, braided hats that were sent to the store for more "leaf" for braiding and a small profit. People brought their young colts to Joel for training. He also assisted his neighbor at butchering and the farm chores. They attended a "braiding bee" at a neighbor's and went "butternutting" at another time. Augusta finished her quilts and dipped candles. When Joel was laid low with a cold, she "assisted with chores." Several of their children were born with very little comment in Joel's daily notes, except for "Augusta took to her bed" or a comment "that a neighbor had come to stay with Augusta."

Ice had to be cut, and ice houses were filled in winter. Sawdust was hauled to cover the ice. In 1865, Joel showed "White's colt at the Cattle Show, and the following day went to the horse trot with his wife." In 1868, they became interested in the "cheese works" and often attended meetings on that subject at the #7 District School. He purchased a cheese vat, and Augusta went to Brookfield "to learn her how to make cheese." Notations appeared often of Augusta's "putting in 10 hours a day" at making cheese. Joel and Augusta wrote of the destruction of their barn by fire and the death of one of their children. Joel sold a prize horse that he had trained and often swapped steers. Their lives were anything but monotonous as they wrote of their pains and losses as well as their pleasures and successes.

In the spring of 1860, cattle owners in Barre became concerned with the fast spreading "Pleuro Pneumonia" which had struck great numbers of cattle. An application was made to the Governor for an extra session of the Legislature to consider measures to control the disease. Charles Brimblecom was chosen as the town agent to attend the session in Boston to urge "passage of acts deemed advisable." The agent was also given general supervision of disease control in the town. In July of that year at a special town meeting, the town adopted those regulations which required all cattle to be fenced, prevented free passage of cattle on the town highways, and no cattle could be brought into town without a special permit. Any person found guilty of breaking the rules was to be punished by a "\$500 fine or imprisonment of not over one year."

Ten years later in 1870, another disease struck the local cattle herds, and measures were taken to combat what was commonly known as hoof and mouth disease. Restrictions on the free movement of cattle in or out

of town without a permit was put into effect and measures were taken similar to those taken earlier. Apparently the controls worked for at the March meeting in 1871, all restrictions on cattle were lifted.

The construction of railroad lines in the 1870s allowed farmers to send produce farther and farther to markets. Loading sheds were built by city milk distributors which enabled more farmers to carry milk to a centralized location. Special milk cars ran regularly from Barre Plains eastward, according to the *Barre Gazette* in 1875. Dozens of teams hauled the eight quart milk cans to the loading platforms at the station where that year the farmers received the sum of 36 cents per can. Flour, grain, and feed stores at the Plains made it more convenient for the farmer to obtain necessities on returning from the milk trip in the morning.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, there were many large farms in Barre owned by out-of-town taxpayers who resided here part of the time, usually in summers. Many of these gentlemen were wealthy business men from metropolitan areas who invested in large farm acreage in the rural community where new ideas were tried in methods of farming, and new breeds of cattle introduced and tested. Local news items and "Cattle Show Reports" were full of plaudits for the new quality stock and improved methods of agriculture.

Richard's Atlas of Worcester County, in 1898, reported that the Elm Tree Farm of Justin F. Rice had been in the family for 58 years and boasted 197 acres and daily milk shipments to Boston. Rutland Brook Farm of James A. Rice was described as having been in his family for 131 years and consisted of 260 acres which specialized in dairying and stock raising. The Moose Brook Farm, more familiarly known as the David Rice Farm, was owned by C.N. Winship with 1,065 acres, three farm residences, windmills, sixteen wells, and 140 head of cattle. These farms no longer exist. There were many other large farms in the town at that time that were not mentioned in the *Atlas*. We may assume that since a financial contribution was not paid to *Richard's Atlas*, they were, therefore, omitted.

Waves of immigrants that came to America in the early and mid-1800s also influenced farming in Barre. Famine and a dream of better things led many Irish folk to seaports where agents for local shops and mills paid their way and offered them work in the mills. With the "American Dream" as their goal, many of these new citizens saved what little money they earned and put money on what had been for some years abandoned or "run out" farms. They worked from dawn to dark, attempted to return the soil to some sign of previous fertility, and patched and repaired the old homesteads where they dwelt and raised their families. *The Chattel Mortgage Books* of 1838 to 1857 record the story of many of those who failed at farming. Foreclosure on the feather bed, simple household furnishings, livestock, and finally the farm itself

was indicative of the failures.

Again, with the Yankee spirit, the parents educated their children in the hope that the children would not have to repeat the hand to mouth existence of their parents on a worn-out farmstead. The children, after furthering their schooling, found jobs elsewhere, and the parents struggled until fire, death, or foreclosure forced them to quit the farm. Some were more successful and sold their farms before reaching old age, purchased smaller residences in the village, and lived their lives in retirement.

Many years later, the Lithuanians, in the early 1900s, came to American shores with their dreams. They first worked in the shops and mills before they felt the urge to farm. Worn-out and abandoned farms were available. They worked the farms and raised their children who also went to college, and again followed the pattern of their predecessors. Some stayed on the farms as evidenced by several neat, well kept farms that exist today in Barre. These farms are owned and operated by the descendants of these earlier groups.

In 1865, Barre was said to have had 286 farms. By 1905, the number of farms remained the same. By 1925, the number had dwindled to 157, and ten years later fell to 127. In 1934, the average farm acreage was 138 acres, and most of the farm operators were part-time farmers.

In the state of Massachusetts in the 1950's there were 5,000 dairy farms; 2,000 in 1972; 900 in 1980; 460 in 1990; and 416 in 1991. The number of farms has decreased steadily, and in 1980 less than ten farms existed in the town. Several of these farms lease additional acreage where corn and hay are raised. The farm of today is mechanized with machines doing all the heavy work replacing the many hands required in earlier days. Milking parlors, where milk goes directly from the milking machine to large stainless steel tanks, are run by one individual who can now handle well over 100 cows. Several times weekly the milk is "picked up" by being pumped into huge tank trucks, taken to the processor elsewhere, and distributed throughout the east. Modern mechanized farming is far different than that of the fifteen to twenty-cow dairy farms of the 1870s when all milking was done by hand, milk strained and cooled in large milk pans, poured into cans, and cooled in ice. The milk was carted by horse and wagon to the station and shipped by train to the city markets. The farmer had oxen or a team of horses, swine, poultry, and sheep in addition to the cattle. Nearly all food for the family and livestock was produced on the farm, an undertaking which required many hands and long hours.

Farms and farm lands are now threatened by the large sums of money offered by the developers of housing projects and shopping malls. Farm lands in Barre have dwindled, and many new homes are located where once were hay fields or garden plots. Very few old barns

have survived for they have been replaced by pole buildings partially open to the weather. Abandoned cattle culverts or dry bridges are still visible in several areas of the town. They exist under old roads that traverse what was once active farm land.

Over 1.3 million farm acres in Massachusetts have been lost since World War II. The number of farms in the state has fallen from 35,000 to 6,000 in the same period.

Barre farm properties have been affected by 100% evaluation. Unused farm buildings have been allowed to fall or to be razed due to the high assessment for property tax purposes. Many of the unplowed and fallow fields are being sold.

Despite this, in the last few years a small rural awakening is taking place. In many instances, young couples have purchased parts of farms and back lands and are attempting to retrieve for themselves and their children the satisfying life of living by one's hands.

THE HAT INDUSTRY

Early settlers subsisted to a large extent on the foods produced on their own acreage. If a cash crop could be raised, it helped to purchase items that could not be obtained from their land. Often the cash crop was not enough and any source of income that could be found was most welcome.

In Barre, as in many other communities in this area, a home industry developed in the early 1800s that proved most advantageous. This was the preparation and production of material for a hat industry.

The raw material was rye straw which was easily grown in this climate. At harvest time the rye straw was cut, the tops sheared off, the straw split, bleached, and woven into braid. Much of the straw was prepared in the spring and summer months. The braiding was reserved for the winter months when the demands of the farm were at their lowest.

In an old ledger in the Historical Society files, Benjamin Clark, a storekeeper first in Barre Plains and later in Barre Center, meticulously listed all his transactions. Many of these involved the hat industry. In 1822 credit was issued to Samuel Fisk for "240 yards of straw braid for \$3.00." The following year the rate was the same, 1 1/4 cents per yard.

The processes of the hat industry were "farmed out." Credit for pressing bonnets appeared in the journal in January 1823 when Azuba Wallis was given credit for nine bonnets. The production of boxes to hold the hats seemed to have begun also as a home industry, as Abijah Mead was "credited with one bonnet and box. Lucretia Gowdry was credited with twenty-eight bonnets and boxes." Credit was also given in other entries for sewing 1,241 yards of braid for \$5.62 and, in particular, to Louise Dennis who was allowed "\$6.20 for sewing 1,862 yards of

braid." Another entry allows "\$0.75 for trimming and pressing nine bonnets."

Throughout the year of 1823, many entries appeared for braiding, pressing, or sewing bonnets. Margaret Pratt purchased necessary materials from Clark when in April she was listed as "paying \$0.18 for six yards of bonnet wire and \$0.12 for one yard of ribbon." One of the more prolific and industrious braiders was Hannah Gates who was paid 1 1/8 cents per yard but was also credited with numerous pints of rum over the many months the ledger covers.

Another old ledger recently acquired from the estate of Joseph Rogers, whose family had been in the hat business for many years, reveals that Harding Allen was in the hat business to some extent. He is listed on May 10, 1823 as "purchasing twelve gypsy straw hats at \$1.75, thirty-two gypsy straw bonnets at \$1.33, ninety-one black straw bonnets, fifteen straw bonnets, eight yards of straw lace, six yards of shell trimming and six yards of double chain trim."

The care of the used product was also of concern, as an old scrapbook contained the following instructions: "To bleach Straw Hats, make a paste of flour and sulfur and water. Apply to straw and put in the sun. When thoroughly dry, brush off."

The industry made a step forward when a mechanized process for pressing the hats was devised. Finished hats could be brought to a central point where they were pressed and then varnished. These were distributed to markets in Albany, Hartford, and Boston. John Wheeler Weston was reputed to be one of the first to have such a machine. Weston had been listed many times in 1822 in the old Clark ledger. He had resided in the western part of town, where he had reportedly bought out the rye fields of the Hinkley family. He had married Asenath Howe in 1819, and eventually brought up seven children. He raised rye, and purchased additional rye from neighboring farmers.

Weston's business establishment and home were moved to the property just north of Lincoln Cemetery on Harrison Hill (known as the Robinson or Mills place). This house survived until several years ago, when it was destroyed by fire.

Throughout the town small shops were converted to pressing plants. Great care was taken to guarantee the secrecy of the pressing machine developed by Weston. Competition was keen, and other local manufacturers were eager to learn about the process. Among those anxious to see the secret machine was Charles Lee, another of Barre's successful merchants. He tried, unsuccessfully, through various ruses to get to the upstairs of the Weston establishment to see the pressing machine. After a few years, Chester Gorham, who boarded at Weston's and was a member of the family, was entrusted with taking a machine to Boston so that he could press hats in the city for a fee. Chester became homesick and

pleaded with Weston to be allowed to return. He was instructed to sell the machines, and he was advised that under no conditions was he to sell to anyone from Barre. Nevertheless, in some manner Lee acquired the machine. When Gorham returned to town, he was physically chastised with a horsewhip by the enraged Weston. A law suit followed, sides were taken in the matter, and it was a leading topic of the town for many weeks.

The industry thrived during the mid 1800s and became a million dollar industry. Hat shops had been established in all sections of town. Another change occurred. Palm leaf, which was reputed to be more durable and more easily woven, could be imported. To maintain their industry, local manufacturers imported the necessary palm leaf which was split and distributed to the local braiders who made it into hats. These were then collected and pressed by machine.

About this time Harding P. Woods, a prosperous local merchant, conceived the idea of making Shaker hoods with palm leaf. He devised two looms. One loom for the "webs" and the other loom for the "binds." He went into partnership with Samuel A. Kinsman, and the business prospered. The manufacture of hat boxes for packing the hats was an offshoot of the business. Several lumber mills became box shops. One of these was located on a stream just west of the present Henry Woods Building. The cases were made in which the hoods were sent to market. For some time the price received for the boxes was \$0.25 for each case.

Another related industry was the manufacture of mattresses in which the waste of the palm leaf was used as filling. These mattresses and cushions for churches were highly marketable items. One of these shops was located near the box shop mentioned above just west of the Henry Woods Building on West Street.

The list of hat entrepreneurs was long, and in addition to those already mentioned included owners who were: Dennis, Gambol, Field, Desper, Rogers, Snow, and Osgood. The old Colonnade, later the building which housed the First Parish Church, was moved to a site near the present Beard Block and contained many small businesses. One of them was the hat shop conducted by Woods and Kinsman. After the building burned in 1862, the business was transferred to a building which was located at the site where the present Barre Savings Bank stands. Other hat shops were in the present Upham house (east of the American Legion Post #2 building), in the building on Mechanic Street east of the Town House, and in sections of the long block on Exchange Street between Mechanic and Summer Streets.

The largest of these hat shops was located at the site of the gravel pit on Old Coldbrook Road between Valley and Walnut Hill Roads. The business was started by Woods and Field in 1840. They remodeled an old clothier mill into a hat pressing shop. The shop changed owners sev-



Desper, Rogers and Co., Old Coldbrook Road, Barre, 1890s

eral times, but reached its height as Jason Desper's Hat Shop and Finishing Mill, when it employed many hands and finished over 600 dozen palm leaf hats daily.

The Civil War brought changes as the Southern trade came to an abrupt halt. The subsequent depression caused surplus stock to accumulate and was stored in every available space. Auctions were held in an effort to realize some profit, but prices dropped to \$0.26 cents for a case of six dozen hats.

But the final demise probably came about simply because of a change in styles and in the new material that became available for hats.

The Barre Historical Society has several remnants of this industry: the straw strips, the hand looms on which the trim was made, several straw hats, bonnets, hat boxes and forms on which the hats were shaped, and old ledgers relative to the industry that reveal a more exact story of the trade and craft of hat making.

TRADIN'

Tradin' was a way of life in the period from about 1759 to the 1840s. Not only was it a way of life, but to study the old ledgers is to look into a mirror that reveals the past.

Shops did business on the ground floors of many houses. Many of these shops were tended by the "women folk" while the men folk were doing the heavy chores of necessity away from home at the mills, trades, etc. Cash was rarely used. In the earlier part of our records, accounts were kept in pounds, shillings, and pence, and it was not until after the Revolutionary War that we find dollars were introduced. Often these accounts were kept in both currencies. In import ledgers, the account was in the currency of the country from which the articles originated. Almost all purchases were made by bargaining; the shopkeeper asked

more than he could get, and the buyer offered less than he was willing to pay. If something could not be paid in articles of exchange, then it was bargained in services. In the old ledgers, the most common set up was that the credit column would be on one side and the debit on the other. On the credit side were such common credits as haying, laying stone walls, carpentry work, repairing and plowing roadways, and time of horse or oxen and self.

Books were scarce and so often were used over again by inverting the unused part of the book and starting from the other end. As a result, these account books told the story of several enterprises. Books were handmade, hand stitched, and sewn together with tough linen thread, as were pages, when torn or ripped.

Glass was another rarity, and credit was given for the return of a rum or wine bottle or glass. One had to bring his own container for molasses or liquid that was acquired in the local store.

The Barre Historical Society is indeed fortunate in having in its possession several old ledgers and account books from these dates of 1759 to the later 1800s. One of the most interesting of these is that of Henry Brigham of Northboro, whose book covers the years 1759 to 1774. It began in the back of the book and went toward the front so that the last dates of entry were in the front of the book. This book is of handmade paper and probably made by the individual himself, since he was a "cordwainer" by trade. He not only mended shoes but made them as well. Mr. Brigham was apparently a shoemaker and paymaster in the Continental Army, and he kept his accounts in pounds, shillings, and pence, as the Treasury Department was only established in 1789. In the first portion of the book are several pages which contain a list of the "Officers - Names as they Rank in Yr. 1759," showing residence of each and amount each was paid. A "Liet. How of Rutland, Ens. Edward Clark - Rutland District, and Capt. Elijah Smith - Coldspring" were all entries in the list. A Colonel received the amount of 25 pounds per month, and a private received 1 pound, 16 shillings. The others ranged in between.

In between the pay entries and the bookkeeping was an occasional diary item such as:

"July 20 - About 8 o'clock we had orders to strike our tents. At two o'clock the next morning accordingly we struck our tents Ticonderoga. About sun set we landed near the landing place where we were ordered to lea all night. It happened to be a wet day. The night was breeding dark and windy which took our bateau so fast that we were obliged to row all night to keep us from running ashore or stoving one against another. As we had done all,

we had like to have perished. Sunday about 9 o'clock we landed all safe 2 miles this side of the mills and marched over the mountain. Just tired to Death. About 12 of the Rangers and Indians began to fire on each other. Not many killed, we were soon ordered to take post on an eminence southwest of Carrilon Fort and cast up a breastwork which was soon completed. At sunset orders for one half to stand round the breastwork all night".

Another interesting excerpt was as follows:

"Tues - July 2 - Col. Willard with his Regiment, Col. Mountgomery and Col. Lovell of Hampshire set out for Albany to escort the train and ammunition to here. We arrived about 9 o'clock at night. Yesterday a few went - 16 men to peele some bark for there tents were surprised by a number of French & Indians which killed and scalped six of them, in the open land in sight of the camp and wounded 2 more. Third night 11 o'clock the camp was alarmed by an Indian firing at one of outer sentry and the sentry fired at him again supposing he wounded him by blood being seen."

In 1765, Mr. Thomas Brown had his wife's shoes soled for 1 shilling 4 pence, and a new pair made for his wife for two pounds. In December 1760, Edward Baker had his shoes soled for 1 shilling as did many other officers who had work done by the shoemaker for themselves and their families. Credit was listed to Luke Eager this same year as follows: "4 coppers, 3 coppers and eggs, cutting wood, and 1 doz. eggs."

Spelling was purely phonetic, and although one smiles at the simplicity of the writing, one can only marvel at the clarity of it after this length of time. Items listed were "Febr. 24, 1773 for 2 shot pouches - 12 shillings, 6 pence" and on Jan. 1, 1767 "credit to William Bow as follows: 1 load wood, 2 (pounds) 5 (shillings) 0 (pence), one lump butter 0-2-0, cash 0-11-3....1767 - August - Butter - Rum and Sugar - Salt (1 pound), lamb, rum, and sugar-hogfoot."

From pages of an old ledger of Daniel M. Parker of Parker Mills, Coldbrook (near the old railroad crossing now no longer used), dated 1854 through 1857, are entries of the lumber business which he ran. He lists "a scythe for \$.30; Mr. Lee for drawing beams to Worcester \$10.00, and 2 lanterns \$ 1.43." Besides the regular listing for board and times sawing, he listed "grinding axes 25 cents, fence pickets, ox yoke \$1.00, plow beam and plow hand to Rice, \$5.00."

Luke Houghton's ledger (1834-1876) composed of three complete

books which cover this period shows Mr. Houghton to be a cabinet maker and local "friendly undertaker and coffin maker deluxe." Entries are made for each person with whom he did business. Many memos and receipts were stitched in by hand so as not to lose them. "March 8, 1836 Nelson Houghton began to bord - by making 1 bedsted at \$1.00, 1 Step Table \$0.50, 1 wash stand \$0.75, one 3 foot kitchen table \$0.95, 1 large table \$2.00." Houghton's "bord" which began July 2 and is listed as work for the total sum of money owed as labor for "bord".

Apparently "French bedsteads" and Grecian tables were popular items for tradin', for those items appeared often. Timothy Hinckly purchased of Luke Houghton in November 1845 "1 large rocking chair, a small rocking chair, 6 common chairs, 1 stand and table, 3 1/2 foot cherry table for \$4.50, 1 wash stand, 6 more common chairs, pine chest for \$4.00" with a large total bill for the above of \$23.00.

On a loose page is an account of items purchased by Mr. Houghton from an Edward Baker, who must have been a storekeeper. Prices of staples were: "1 bushel potatoes \$0.50, 2 1/2 lbs. of salt pork \$0.40, seed potatoes \$1.20." One lamp was purchased at Lee and Jenkins "for \$0.22." Mr. J.W. Snow was a good customer for between September 17, 1834 and April 1835, he purchased items of furniture worth \$116.87, the various pieces being listed and the most expensive being "1 bureau \$7.00; 1 best bureau \$9.00; 1 secretary \$12.00." On March 15 is listed "by making one cheap bureau—\$4.00". Hat boxes, bread troughs, mahogany hat blocks, and to Abel Rice, agent for School Ward No. 1, was entered on October 27, 1834, "Repairing benches and desk \$4.50; setting 9 squares of glass and repairing windows \$1.25; repairing bak house \$0.75; cleaning school \$2.00."

Some of the antiques of today that bring prices from \$50 to thousands of dollars and even more may have been made right here by this cabinet maker. He added to his trade by working out by day for "himself and oxen \$2.00 - 1 days work for self and man, \$3.00." Along with his cabinet making, he accounted for the sad occurrences as "coffin for child \$3.00 to Edward D. Blakely." Along with these were the following names as being recipients of coffins made: "Miss Eaton, Widow Parlin, Widow Nurse, Widow Lamb, Betsey Bacon, Miss Caldwell, Miss McCullar. To Elias Ayres (who must have been the Agent of the Poor), 1 coffin and conveyance to cemetery for Dick Thompson (a Black man who lived on a small plot of land where St. Joseph's Parish Hall is located) \$1.50; Elisha Bacon, for coffin and going with Hearse \$6.00; Miss Betsey Clark for coffin for 'Old Step' \$3.00." Coffins varied according to the wood used in the design. For George Fay's daughter the cost was \$15.00. "April 22, 1847, to the Estate of George William Nurse who was blown to pieces in Hobbs Powder mill age 26 yrs.—coffin and going with hearse \$6.00." He listed 25 coffins as total for 1847. In this

last type of entry names, dates, prices, type, age, and often time and cause of death were given. In 1815, Seth Lee was "credited with \$6.75 for use of his horse to Ticonderoga = 135 miles and horse to Rutland \$0.25."

Other services were returned as payment: the shoe maker was credited with making shoes and boots, farmers with produce, and manufacturers with articles of his making.

A ledger obtained by Miss Roper from California was that of Benjamin Clark, a storekeeper in Barre Plains in the early 1800s, later in Barre Village, and much later a manufacturer. He built a dam across the Ware River, just above the present MDC intake, and was in the race for water rights with Silas Bemis, who also built a dam in the same area. He was in litigation for many years over the water rights. According to the *Mass. Inventory of Towns and Cities*, it states: "An early store was that of Benjamin Clark established in Barre Plains about 1815 and later moved to Barre Center. In about 1824 the stock in trade of this store was valued at \$2,500."

Looking through this old ledger of Benjamin Clark (years 1822-24) the major items sold were spirits (brandy, rum, gin), brown sugar, tobacco, snuff, powder shot, turpentine, resin, sperm oil (which was the medium used for lighting), tea, spices, dyes, salted fish, and sewing materials. Credit items were issued for produce such as cider, sole leather, butter, fruit, cheese, wool, grains, walnuts, flax seed, wood, poultry at \$0.09 each, tallow, hogs, firkins at \$0.10 each, hay, hides, homespun wool socks, whipsticks, etc. Women wove braid at home which was used for credit: "\$0.01 1/4 per yard was what was paid by Clark." This must have been just prior to the making of the entire hat in the home. The word "biscuit" is used frequently. This must have been what is called a cookie today. Nearly every page carries the name of such items as "Souchong Tea and Shell and Ivory Combs." Those were popular items with the women for it was in their names that many of them were listed. A large comb was purchased for \$0.83.

October 1822 an entry was made charging the "First Parish in Barre \$0.58 for 1 Bass viol string." A violin string was sold to Elijah Whiting for \$0.10. Whether an error in spelling or not, "1 oz. peppermint" appears several times. It was easy to see which of the women was possibly a dressmaker for regularly her name would appear as purchaser of cloth, buttons, silk, and yarn.

Mileage paid was not very high. A trip to Hubbardston for horse and wagon was \$0.33 and a trip to Templeton and back was listed as \$0.40. A trip to Hardwick by chaise was \$0.50 and to Boston \$2.50. Credit was listed as \$0.06 per pound for cheese. As would be expected, most of the credit items were listed in the fall months of the year during

and shortly after harvest. Poultry, butter, hogs, cheese, pork, lard, and the ever constant appearing straw braid was heaviest during the time when they could "whip up" salable items. This reminds one of the times, according to stories related, of the custom of doughnuts appearing in the children's dinner pails shortly after the first of the year or "butchering time." The fat was then fried out into lard, and thus doughnuts were plentiful as was lard for credit.

Jonas Smith paid some on his account by "mending boots of Leonard for \$0.50," who was probably a member of the Clark family and also to "Oliver Reed for cutting out a waistcoat for Leonard." Sally Green was "credited with \$1.97 for making a silk coat in May 1819."

Prince Walker, son or brother of Quork, was listed for "four days labor of harvesting at \$1.33, Stephen Chipman by part of three days labor making grain chute and shelves in shop \$1.25, and Prince Walker, again, on November 18 for working 1 1/2 days and banking the house \$0.50."

A number of times the item "kerseymere shawl" was listed, and the going price was \$7.50 throughout the ledger. Mailing a letter was so rare as to be listed and then only to some man of title such as Esq., Dea., Capt., etc.

The many trips to Boston explained what happened to the many items taken in trade that could not be used by the shopkeeper himself or that he could not dispose of locally. Boston was also the source of supply of those items such as silks, paints, dyes, spices, molasses, rum, etc., that were needed by home folk. Such entries as to James Oliver, \$14.75 for "carting 1477 lbs. from Boston" appeared weekly. Credit for pressing bonnets first appeared nearly weekly in the ledger on January 10, 1823 where three entries were listed: "to Azubah Wallis, 9 bonnets; Abijah Mead, 1 bonnet and box; and Mrs. Lucretia Gowdery purchased 28 bonnets with boxes for same for a total bill of \$63.58. Miss Anna Wallis was credited with \$5.63 for sewing 1241 yards of braid for \$4.13, trimming the same for \$0.74 and trimming and pressing 9 bonnets \$0.75. Louise Dennis was paid \$6.20 for sewing 1862 yards of braid. March 12 and 13, 1823, five entries were listed referring to either braiding, pressing or sewing bonnets. Margaret Pratt on April 5, 1823 purchased 6 yards bonnet wire and one yard of ribbon for \$0.30."

Hannah Gates must have been an exceptionally industrious woman, for she was listed regularly in the credit column for "so many yards of woven cotton cloth at \$0.3 per yard, so many yards of braid at \$0.01 1/8 per yard." Time lapses were short between these homemade products presentations. Maybe the reason for her speed was the regular purchase of one quart of rum and two ounces snuff along with her Souchong Tea.

"Murray's Grammar brought the price of \$0.92 with 1/4 pounds of pepper included. Cash paid for Sheet Iron \$8.37, Carting same from



Barre Common Scene before the 1900s

Boston, \$0.34, at a total charge to George Fitts \$8.71.”

If one has ever read the rules for the separation of the church into two distinct groups and the complaints against their minister, one cannot help but wonder if the following entries applied to those very reasons. To Rev. James Thompson, “April 1823, for 1/2 ounce opium, \$0.42; 6 ounces hops, \$0.48.” He also purchased “bottle spruch \$0.10.”

So much for a way of life. One can feel as if one understood a bit more of life as it was lived at that time from those entries which were put into the books with a homemade quill, herb inks, dried with sand spread over the wet entry, and dusted off. The daily or weekly customer purchased his rations and often the items of rum and sugar were on the list. A cash deposit was a rarity, but nevertheless, the large sum of \$0.12 was entered on the credit side of those hard-working folks who made so many of the items we think nothing of buying today. So it was the exchange of one commodity for another. Our system of credit is largely based on the old barter system. It is still seen in the exchange between nations, where imports are balanced against exports and differences paid by coin or bullion.

No wonder that the country store was the center of activity for in actuality it was the center of life itself. It was there that the politics of the towns were discussed, deals were made, bargains arranged, and “Country Tradin’” took place.

CHATTEL MORTGAGE RECORDS

According to an old dictionary (circa 1790) the word chattels is defined as "all goods or possessions whatever, excepting such are in the nature of a freehold." Later it defined "a chattel as an article of furniture or other movable property as compared to real estate." A chattel mortgage is the transfer of personal property as security for debts. A perusal of some of the early *Chattel Mortgage Books* is a most interesting study of the possessions of the times which had value enough to accommodate a debt. The chattel mortgages were filed, and a record was kept of foreclosures and retirements. Interest was not mentioned in the book, but a separate note was drawn which listed the interest due. The law required a chattel mortgage to be in writing and recorded with the Town Clerk in order to make the mortgage valid. In many instances, items were purchased by the person taking the mortgage. Cash was scarce and not readily available.

One notes that several individuals kept reappearing as the holder of so many of the mortgages. In the early 1840s, John Paige of Hardwick, Aaron Brooks, Jr. of Petersham, and David Bacon of Barre often loaned money. The transactions in the earlier records were arranged before banks were established in this area. Money lending became a major business enterprise for some of the more affluent citizens. Several of the store owners held mortgages since they had the cash available as reimbursement for the debts by their customers. The excess chattels or personal property were quickly disposed of, since the storekeeper had greater access to Boston or city markets where they made their trips worthwhile by cartage both ways - taking items they found incompatible with their merchandising and returning with items needed locally in their stores.

In March 1839, Lyman Sibley, Town Clerk, recorded in fine legible handwriting that Eli Wheelock, innkeeper of the Barre Hotel (later the Naquag Hotel at the Fagnoli Block) mortgaged to Alvah Hathaway, yeoman, for \$315.00, "1 set of light blue crockery ware, 1 caster, 3 doz. half-pint tumblers, 3 long tables, 60 knives and forks, 4 buck handled carver and fork, 3 horn carver and fork, 1 tin oven, 10 beds, bedsteads and cords, 4 looking glasses, 2 wash stands, 2 wash bowls and pitchers, 4 reflectors and lamps, 4 bar kegs, 2 pair heavy decanters, 6 glass cans, 1 long table in my kitchen, 1 long table in buttery, 1 card table in parlor, 1 iron mortar, all of which I bought of said Hathaway." Again, five years later the same contents were placed as collateral when Eli Wheelock sold the hotel to Joseph Robinson.

In May 1839, Orion Broad, baker, for \$100 paid by Charles Kimball of Barre, took a mortgage on "1 black mare, 15 cords wood, 8 barrels of flour and one yellow Bread Wagon."

Also in 1839, Ephraim Sprague, the contracting carpenter of the recently completed Town House, mortgaged to Truman Beech, housewright, who was a partner in the Town House project, for \$200.00 the following items:

“1 buggy wagon, 1 lumber wagon, 1 cooking stove, 1 pine table, 1 dozen common chairs, 1 pine bureau, all the earthen ware in the pantry in my house, one undivided half of teacles (tackles), 1 grindstone, 1 tenant saw, 1 iron bar, 2 large chains, 1 wheelbarrow, all the barrels in my cellar, 1 time piece and all the window sashes, one undivided half of all the lumber in and about the Town House and in the lumber yard near where said Sprague lives, and 4 glass lamps.”

In July of the same year, Anson Clark bought a Powder Keg Manufactory that was owned by Charles Bemis, Charles Kimball, and Welcome Bates for seventeen hundred dollars. He “mortgaged to Bemis, Kimball, and Bates the horses, harnesses, wagons, key machinery, stave machine and saw, hoop dresser and all lumber, logs and stock at Brett’s Mills which were located at East Barre Falls on the Ware River.”

In August of that same year Samuel Jackson, Samuel Tenney and Larkin Smith, doing business as Jackson & Tenney Co., Traders, “mortgaged to David Bacon all the contents of the store and business for \$2,000.00 and listed them as follows:

“1 sorrel mare, 1 sorrel horse, 1 bay horse, 5 team horses, one team wagon, 5 harnesses, 3 new wagons, 1 buggy, 1 gig and harness, 1 chaise and harness, all the wood, boards and shingles in and about our store on Barre Common, about 300 lbs. of wool now in the chamber of said store, all the palm leaf hats, all the silks, Broad Cloth, cassimeres and satinets, all the earthen and crockery ware, pieces of calico and prints.”

Jackson & Tenney Co. also had a store at the cotton factory village (Smithville, later known as White Valley) and mortgaged some of the contents of that store to Willis Smith of Holden and Edward Wilcox of Petersham, and Seth Lee and Rufus Holden of Barre.

In the fall of 1839, George Bowker acquired of Elias Ayres, a brown or dark bay mare and for security placed “one undivided half an acre of corn now standing in a field near Widow King’s house, fifty bushels of potatoes now at my house and one sow shoat with a black spot on her

left hip, plus the newly acquired horse." All this equaled \$45.00.

Besides Jackson, Tenney & Co., other stores which appeared often as holder of mortgages were Woods & Field; Wadsworth, Leland & Company; Lee, Jenkins' Company; Leland & Russell; S & C Caldwell, Traders; Wadsworth & Allen; Nichols and Carter; and Jenkins, Gorham & Company.

Edmund Houghton mortgaged "the hides and tanning equipment from his shop on the west side of the common consisting of 90 sides of upper leather in the three vats in the tanyard...all for \$50" to Blanchard & Lesure of Worcester. That mortgage was retired in the fall of the same year. In March 1842, George W. Conant of Barre mortgaged "for \$100 to Charles Conant, also of Barre, furniture and all his carpenter and mechanic tools such as saws, planes, molding tools, chisels, etc., and two thousand feet of boards and planks."

Elisha Gleason mortgaged to Edmund Bangs, "the new house which I am now building on the east side of Summer Street."

Joseph N. Bates mortgaged to Daniel Bacon "the contents and furnishings of his apothecary shop" on the east side of the common.

In October 1842, Samuel M. Hobbs, owner and operator of the Barre Powder Mills, mortgaged to Charles Henshaw of Boston the following items for \$900.00: "3 tons of salt peter, 100 casks of powder unfinished and finished, 800 lbs. Brimstone (sulfur), about 20 cords of maple wood, about 4 cords of fire wood, about 100 bushels charcoal and all the apparatus belonging to the Powder Mills." At the same time Hobbs was retiring a mortgage to Jenkins & Lee & Co., on "old furnishings in his house and sundry iron gudgeons and bands" along with some "old unused salt peter bags and 8 bushels of unhusked corn." Another mortgage in that year which would appear extremely unusual today was that of Erastus Clark for \$100 paid by John Hastings, both of Barre, and listed the following items as surety; "all the manure on the place where I now reside that is carted on the fields and all that is in the hog yard, and all that is in the barn yard, also 400 lbs. cheese."

In February 1843, Jason Jenkins, mason, acquired a nine year old bay horse of Ginery Twichell and mortgaged it for "\$42.74 to James Jenkins, Jr., of Barre, Artemasa Lee of Templeton, Lyman E. Sibley and Clark S. Bixby of Barre," doing business as the firm of Jenkins, Lee & Co.

Nahum F. Bryant sold to Erasmus Moore of Boston some property which had been in the care of Larkin Smith and listed as a "library of theological and miscellaneous works, cabinet ware, crockery and glass ware, wooden earthen and tin war, bedding, plus some of his personal property in East Boston, clock, looking glasses, carpets, table linens, tools, Brittaina ware, hard ware and silver ware."

Hiram Wadsworth, trader, for \$6,000 mortgaged to Samuel Denny and Hubbard Woodbury of Barre and Stephen Wilcox of New Braintree,

"all the stock of goods of every description now in my store in said Barre" with an annexed schedule of nearly every item in the store which covered thirty pages in the *Chattel Mortgage Book*.

Dexter Dennis took a mortgage on Linneas Ensor and George Pearson, known as the firm name of Ensor and Pearson, covering machinery for making gold pens, "50 lbs. of German silver, 50 lbs. brass, 2 ounces gold, 20 ounces of silver plus furniture and contents of their pen and pen holder business." Those same items were used several times as collateral for several other loans within a period of a few months.

In 1843 Leander Eaton of Worcester and formerly of Barre, jeweler and watch maker, sold to Davis Thayer of Worcester, "2 cases of wood clocks, show cases, sign, brass 8 day regulator, tools and apparatus, wallets and pocket books, razor strops, hair and tooth brushes, trunks, scales, small grindstone, thimbles, 2000 percussion caps, watch oil and broaches."

Early in 1844 Jonathan S. White purchased of Lansford B. Felton and took out a mortgage with him on the contents and furnishings of White's newly acquired harness, trunk and carriage trimming shop which was in the old Hathaway Block (located at the St. Joseph's Church site). Felton had removed from Barre to Milford, Massachusetts after he sold his business to White, and two years later retired the mortgage.

Samuel Lilley, painter, mortgaged to John Pratt of Worcester, his "carpets, cane seated chairs, mahogany table, gilt framed looking glass, brass fire set, 1 bay mare, pleasure wagon and harness" for a sum of \$200. Albert Alden, noted engraver and the second editor and publisher of the *Barre Gazette* (who succeeded C.P. Thompson), mortgaged for \$500 to John Monroe of Barnstable in May 1844, house furnishings, books, "200 lithographs, prints, 50 steel engravings and 150 wood cuts." Alden's engraving still tops the front page of the *Barre Gazette* and is the name he gave to his paper which had formerly been known as *The Farmer's Gazette*. Alden took another mortgage on household furnishings of Daniel Bacon the following month for \$200 in addition to the previous mortgage of \$500. Pew No. 6 in the Broad Aisle of the First Parish Church on the lower floor was deeded in 1844 to James W. Jenkins, Jr., for the sum of \$25 by the heirs of Charles Lee and listed Amasa Bigelow of New Braintree, David Lee, Mary Ainsworth and Wm. F. Ainsworth, husband of the said Mary of Barre, Artemas Lee of New York, and Susan L. Patrick of Lee, Illinois as heirs. It is interesting to note that pews in the church were considered as valuable as any other personal property.

The *Barre Patriot*, the second local newspaper, was founded by Nahum F. Bryant, who mortgaged the new publication to Daniel Bacon in April 1845 for \$800. Surety listed was "Printing press, standing press, and all types, materials, stands, cases and furnishings, connected

with the *Barre Patriot*.

In April 1846, Noah Williams, barber, mortgaged to William F. Ainsworth "all his household furnishings and articles plus the furnishings of his barber shop in Barre central village." Some time later Calvin Williams, barber, took a mortgage with Jonathan White and Pliny B. Washburn on his "household furnishings, plus a quantity of soap."

Alvah Hathaway mortgaged to Scotto Berry of Hardwick for \$400 "all the articles in my store in the center of Barre" which consisted of "shelf goods, West India goods, such as molasses, teas, oils, etc., plus his farming tools, planks and boards at my mill in Barre plus Pew #19 and #25 in the Universalist Meeting House in Barre and a swarm of bees." The above Scotto Berry had a mill at the Loring Bridge site near the junction of Town Farm Road and South Barre Road near where the Prince River crosses the present roadway.

In August 1848, Edward Avery of Barre took a mortgage of \$800 with Walter A. Bryant "on the *Barre Gazette* newspaper establishment and Printing Office including all presses, types and other printing materials both for the newspaper and the job printing and the 'Good Will' of subscription lists and advertising patronage." In August, two years later, Nahum F. Bryant took a mortgage with Seth Adams & Co., of Boston for \$1,300 on the following items: "power press, table for press, roller frames for hand press, type, form boards, script, Job letters, roller kettles, gallies and all printing materials in the *Barre Gazette* Printing Office plus the good will of the subscription list and advertising patronage." Nahum Bryant was the brother of W.A. Bryant, editor and publisher of the *Barre Gazette* and held opposing political views to his brother. Political feeling ran high and was the origin of the *Barre Patriot* in 1844, which flourished for a few years and finally merged with the *Barre Gazette* about 1856.

Orasmus F. Woods put a surety in 1849 on "all the stock in trade now being in the Barre Saloon occupied by me as a Restaurant and Confectionery on the east side of Barre Common."

Hiram Kimball in 1850 took a mortgage on the contents of his wheel barrow shop and listed the chattels as "200 wheelbarrow hubs, felloes and spokes sufficient for same" in the Stephen Heald shop in Barre.

In January 1852 the *Barre Patriot* and all its fixtures in the Colonnade Building were mortgaged by Charles E. Stevens for \$800 to Hiram Wadsworth, James W. Jenkins, Jr., Seth Caldwell, James Woods, Lyman F. Rogers, who resided in Barre and Seth W. Bannister of Carlisle. That mortgage was discharged in June 1852, and Stevens had his paper free and clear for a while. The newspapers had a seesaw existence, for they were mortgaged back and forth from owner to lender. Apparently all was not easy in the publishing field.

A boot manufactory in the Colonnade Building was that of Parley D.

Houghton, who mortgaged "one bootbreak, five dozen screws, eight dozen men and boys boot forms, and all the tools belonging to me pertaining to the manufacture of boots, plus his household furnishings."

William Leighton, apparently a photographer, in 1852 mortgaged to George M. Buttrick and Amasa Gibson who were the hat manufacturers of Buttrick & Gleason "my apparatus of dissolving views, comprising of one pair of dissolving lanterns, and Oxyhydrogen microscope and apparatus, 125 views and scenery."

In November 1852, Orasmus F. Woods of Barre took a mortgage with John W. Rice for knife boxes which contained numerous sizes and grades of knives, "Ground Stopple Powder jars" which contained herbs, phials and bottles of chemicals, mortars, sealing wax and all the contents of his Montezuma Saloon. The saloon and its contents were again mortgaged to Clark Jamerson by Wilson Newell of New Salem who acquired the saloon in May 1853. A month later Asa Ward bought the Montezuma Saloon from Wilson Newell and Clark Jamerson, again, held the mortgage. In the fall of 1853 the saloon changed hands with Henry J. Shattuck being the purchaser.

Aspasio T. Wilson, in 1854, mortgaged to John W. Rice all the materials in his shop above the post office. Some of the items listed were "cassimeres, doeskin, broadcloth, linen, cutting table, mirror, shears, pressing irons and rulers." From those items listed we can assume that Wilson was a tailor. He put collateral on a loan in 1856 on the same items in his shop owned by John W. Rice. In the 1870 *Atlas*, Apasio T. Wilson was listed as postmaster in the building at the corner of Mechanic and Exchange Streets.

J.F. Butters, hatter, took a mortgage on "all my tools for carrying on the business of Hatter and all my stock and trade consisting of hats, caps, furs and unmanufactured stock now in the shop occupied by John M. Dowe & Co. on the westerly side of the common." Butters, again, mortgaged to Dowe in June 1854 his "coney, opossum and rabbit muffs, various types of fur caps, tippets, straw hats and hat boxes, tissue and wrapping paper, writing materials, band boxes, machine steamer and fixtures, benches, cord, baskets, kettles, life preserver, 2 violins, 1 bugle, rubber boots, carpet bags, valises, trunks, bird cage and bird, showcases, advertising cards, and all chattels in the shop occupied by said Butters as hatter." Dowe, again, took out a loan on nearly the same items the following year. Only this time he mortgaged the items to Lyman F. Rogers who foreclosed the mortgage in May 1855.

Jesse Brown mortgaged to Jason Gorham the personal property (except what was exempt by law) belonging to Brown in the Naquag House, part of which was already mortgaged.

Nearly fifty years later, collateral covered various items which appeared still popular as surety on loans. Much of the surety was

restricted to farm items, shops and contents as in the fall of 1887 when Almond E. Thresher purchased of Frank J. Clark "one portable engine and boiler, one portable saw mill including carriage frame, circular saw and belting, steam piping and smoke stack."

Personal interest showed when Bartholomew Haire sold to Charles H. Follansby his cows "being known by the following names, viz; Fraulein, Jamaica, Nelly, Eco, Topsy, Jenny, Lena 2nd, Rose, Bell, Lady Hamilton and Dinah." One noted that by 1898 registered livestock was being listed with registry number which was a situation that was not evidenced in the earlier years. In May 1890 a mortgage was taken by Henry Woods of Boston Hotel Company including, "the parcels of land with buildings, being the same premises conveyed to the Barre Hotel Company by Alexander G. Williams dated 23 June 1888, plus the contents of the Barre Hotel," as listed in the three pages of the *Chattel Mortgage Book* and signed by James F. Davis, as agent for the Barre Hotel Company.

In 1892, J. Andrew Rogers, Jesse A. Rogers and Willie H. Osgood & copartners in the firm of Rogers Osgood Company, mortgaged to Charles D. Holbrook of Palmer "33 sewing machines and fixture including 25 Wilcox & Gibb braid machines, 8 hydraulic presses, blocks and brims, 3 sets new shears, all machine shop machinery, bluing arrangements, paster furniture and fixtures and all other movable machinery, tools and stock, both wrought and unwrought contained on the premises now occupied by us in the straw business."

Rogers & Osgood Company, formerly of Barre and as of 1893 of Palmer, leased for a term of five years for the sum of \$100 yearly, to Ellery S. Hunter of Spencer part of their property nearest the Mill Pond on the Prince River known as the "Box Shop" including the "water wheel, shafting, pulleys, hangers, belting, etc., and full control of the water power with an option to purchase the property listed."

The following year Ellery S. Hunter of Barre mortgaged to George R. Simonds, also of Barre, "machinery situated in the building known as the old 'box shop' excepting and reserving those items owned by an association of individuals known as the Barre Board of Trade, said items marked B.B.O.T."

In the 1888 to 1889 Book, numerous women declared by record in "a certificate of married woman doing business as a separate account." The larger percentage of those women registering declared themselves as "farmers and stock raisers."

In the early 1890s, numerous individuals employed by J. Edwin Smith at Smithville's Cotton Mill signed off all claims and demands for services as Mill Operatives and appointed R.J. Stevenson as their attorney. Assignments were held as security for debts due from the individual named. It is deduced that these debts might very well have been for

rent or bills at the company store, for the village of Smithville was owned by the company. Houses, stores, and service shops were clustered around the mill complex which made it hardly necessary for the worker to leave the village.

Mary Paquin, wife of Charles H. Paquin, filed her certificate for a married woman to do business on a separate account and in 1896 she listed her chosen field as "Blacksmithing and Millenary," and the place of business was at Barre Plains. That same year, May D. Nickerson listed her business as "Dressmaker and Milliner" at Barre Plains also.

Apparently when hay was used as a security, and the mortgaged foreclosed, two tons of hay had to be exempted by law from the taking so that the single cow remaining might be properly fed for the year.

Not until June 1911 was an automobile listed as a chattel and then "one Model T touring car, factory number 57050" for \$350 was acquired by Benjamin A. Harrington.

Most of the chattels listed were farm equipment, farm products, shop and household furnishings. Today chattel mortgages still exist but the articles of values have changed, now being largely for automobiles and contents of businesses. Rarely does one take a mortgage on eating utensils, bedding, or furniture essential to daily living. Most of the mortgages today are in the hands of loan companies or banking houses. The *Chattel Mortgage Books* are an excellent record of the way of doing business one hundred to one hundred fifty years ago. Owners of businesses put their possessions of value and contents of shops as security. There are many more mortgages that are not mentioned here. An attempt has been made to select those mortgages that were unusual in content and show a sample of mortgages of the time.

The recording hands of the Town Clerk were to be admired. Entries were simply done, neat, and legible.

POWDER MILLS

Every generation is prone to think that its problems are novel and that they are wrestling against situations that are new. The reluctance to see a hazardous waste dump or a prison in one's own "backyard" gives rise to demonstrations and objections. This attitude is far from new, but more recent situations have gained prominence only because more legal avenues are open to those who object.

There was never vocal support for a powder mill in Barre. When Silas Bemis moved from Spencer to Barre in 1810 after purchasing a portion of Great Farm #17 (known as the Chapman Farm) and began to take advantage of a water privilege on the Ware River by building a dam, it is probable that most of the residents had no idea of his plans for the site. No records are extant of public opinion. The location near the



Remnants of an old mill, where Route 122 branches off to South Barre, believed to be part of an old powder mill

subsequent railroad bridge of the Ware River Railroad and slightly upstream from the present MDC intake was remote from any settlement of the time, so any objections to the mill would have been minor.

In 1824, after a hiatus of several years, three members of the Bemis family and Samuel Hobbs of Spencer purchased a piece of land along the Ware River about three miles southeast of Barre Center, near the present Powder Mill Pond.

Hobbs had been in the powder business, and he and his wife, the former Caroline Whittemore, took up residence in a house near the Powder Mill dam. This house no longer exists. Within a short time, Hobbs, Bemis and Company was manufacturing black powder, and although we do not know the exact date production began, the mills are very much in evidence on the 1835 map of Barre.

George Hobbs, son of Samuel, soon joined his father and the Bemis' in business. He had married Louisa S. Allen, daughter of Otis and Eunice (Winslow) Allen, who had a large farm at the junction of Washburn Road and West Street. Under the management of the Hobbs men, the powder business prospered.

A canal was dug from the west side of a large dam directing water by the buildings of the new venture. Along the canal, suitably spaced apart for safety, were six mills.

The "mixing mill" was the first step in the process. Here quantities of sulfur, saltpeter and charcoal were broken and mixed by large pestles attached by a rod to the water wheel. It was necessary to add a small

amount of water to the mixture, which was transferred from mortar to mortar over a period of twenty-four hours. The amount of water was critical; too much could ruin the batch, too little could result in overheating, and a spontaneous explosion. The powder would be pressed into cakes, rolled, and ground or "corned" by large metal wheels revolving within a large tub.

From this stage, the powder went to a sifting mill where it was shaken in sieves so that "kernels" of powder could be separated by size. The size determined the ultimate use of the powder. In the sifting mill there was always a great deal of dust, creating a hazard to the health of the workers, as well as an atmosphere conducive to frequent explosions.

Next, the powder was placed in a drying shed where air was forced through the building to remove superfluous moisture. The final step took place in the glazing mill, where the powder was tumbled in barrels with graphite to finish the drying process and round off the "kernels." The powder was then placed in twenty-five pound kegs, usually made of pine staves with hoops of willow or alder on both ends. Because of the hazards involved, most of the buildings were of wood with sides loosely boarded so that the force of the explosion would be expended outward. Usually, the loosely boarded side was toward the canal in the hope that equipment would be able to be retrieved from that side. Water from the canal could be used to quell any resulting fire, and the explosion would be directed away from adjacent buildings.

Throughout the mill complex workers were required to wear wooden pegged or leather stitched shoes. Those with metal nails could cause a spark that would ignite an explosion.

Charles Bemis, who in 1830 had been assessed for Powder Mill and 20 acres, died in 1842. The following year deeds were recorded from Silas Bemis to Silas Bemis, Jr., indicating that another of the founders of the mill had died. Charles Bemis' interest in the Powder Mills was sold to Ashbel Pepper of New Braintree. Ashbel's wife was the former Caroline Woods. Caroline's sister Catherine had married Seth Caldwell. Caldwell soon bought the interest of his brother-in-law. He became agent for the company, which was a post that he held for many years. Catherine Caldwell and Caroline Pepper were the daughters of Captain James and Katherine (Bowman) Woods. Their brother Harding P. Woods married Sally Caldwell, a sister of Seth. Thus, the profits of two of our early mercantile families were apparently invested in the powder company.

In 1844 the powder works was reported to have produced 100,000 pounds of powder. The company found itself competing with such companies as the E.I. Dupont Powder Mills of Wilmington, Delaware. Two years later, according to an advertisement, the price of blasting powder in Barre was 2 kegs and 2 pounds powder, \$5.28.

Sulfur and saltpeter were not obtainable in this area and were probably brought, as many other materials were, from the port at Providence, R.I., through the Blackstone Canal to Worcester, and then by horse and team to Barre.

Marketing was not difficult since the demand for blasting powder increased year by year as various companies began construction of railroads throughout the eastern United States. Mines in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland were also demanding powder from the Barre and Spencer Mills.

Meanwhile, the firm began to have mishaps. Many were not serious, but on April 23, 1847 the *Barre Patriot* headlined a story, "Hobbs Powder Mill Blown Up! One Man Blown to Atoms." In a very graphic style the newspaper reported the death of George W. Nurse, age 26, of Barre, son of Timothy and Patty (Bixby) Nurse, who was "literally blown to atoms and his remains scattered in every direction." A few years later in 1851 another fatality was recorded when Thomas Doyle, 52, a powder maker born in Ireland, was "blown up in the Powder Mill."

In 1853 Samuel M. Hobbs retired. The name of Samuel Potter was added to the firm. Potter was a Barre resident. With the addition of Samuel Cilley of Acton and Addison G. Fay, Frank Fay, Samuel Staples and Lorenzo Eaton, the firm became "A.G. Fay, Potter and Cilley"; and the town evaluation books showed the "Massachusetts Powder Works" assessed to them. The items listed in the assessors records were "buildings and thirty-four acres of land, plus twenty-six acres of the Pepper place plus personal property of team, wagons, etc."

Samuel Cilley became a Barre resident living near the plant. According to record, he died of consumption at 37 years of age and was buried in Acton in November of 1856. The two Fays were cousins. Frank Fay had the larger financial interest. Addison G. Fay was listed as President and, later, Treasurer of the company. Addison G. Fay's name appeared on receipted bills, but there is no evidence that he ever lived in Barre.

For a few years the firm was A. G. Fay, Potter and Co., but when Thomas M. Tolman joined the firm in 1858 his name was added. During this period accidents continued. On January 10, 1857 an explosion followed by a fire destroyed property valued at \$2,000. In June 1858 the plant was plagued by three explosions which destroyed buildings and machinery, wrecking the mixing mill, kernelling and glazing mills, and the press house. Another life was lost, which was that of William Bickford, age 33, a powder maker. Tragedies continued. In 1862 another explosion took the life of C.W. Foster a thirty year-old powder maker who had married Laura E. Holden of Hubbardston only the year before. Two years later, in June, a "slight explosion occurred in the mixing mill," but it was serious enough to cause burns fatal to Michael Dumas, a 30-year-old Canadian. The following month, another explosion occurred in the mixing mill causing no loss of life but some property

damage. Only a week later on July 15, an explosion took place in the rolling mill which totally demolished the mill, machinery, and fractured the shoulder of one of the workers.

With the advent of the Civil War, the company became important as it provided powder for the Union forces. During the war years the plan consisted of "two wheel mills, a corning mill, one press, one glazing mill, one dry house, charcoal burning house, refinery, two magazines with the necessary store house, barns, sawmills, and carpenter shop."

The war years did produce one amusing, if grim, anecdote. The late Charles Harwood, originally from Barre, wrote that a relative held a supervisory position at the powder mill. As a provider of powder for the Union forces, the mill was subject to periodic inspections. The mill official would show the inspectors throughout the plant with a lighted cigar in his mouth. The government man's tour was usually short, as he would hastily approve the operation and quickly depart the premises.

The company was reorganized and incorporated as the Massachusetts Powder Work in 1863, with Adolphus Merriam as President and Addison G. Fay as Treasurer. The following year the towns of Acton, Concord, Stow and Sudbury were included in the franchise. In 1868 the firm became known as the American Powder Company with mills in Acton and the main office in Boston.

Addison G. Fay, who was prominent in the firm beginning in 1853, was born in Southboro, Massachusetts on September 24, 1818, and in his early life was a Universalist clergyman. He left the ministry in 1853 and served as second clerk in the Treasury Department at the Massachusetts State House. Ironically, he met his death as several of his employees had, for on March 24, 1873, the *Barre Gazette* reported that the two mills in Acton were demolished by an explosion which claimed the lives of two workers. Among the several injured was Addison G. Fay. He expired the day after the explosion.

In 1883 the American Powder Company was sold to the American Powder Mills and Addison O. Fay was President. The invention of dynamite, used in blasting, greatly affected the demand for black powder. The distance of the Barre plant caused the company to abandon it. The machinery and many workers were transferred to South Acton. From 1887 to 1900 the Powder Mill property was assessed and taxed to Nathan Pratt of Sudbury, a member of the founding family of the Acton Powder Works. The property was next taxed to Nathan Pratt and George Heywood of Concord until 1902, when the Francis Willey Co., of Bradford, England, purchased the entire property and water privileges.

The location of the powder mill in Barre had some interesting implications. First, it created subsidiary industries. Some of the charcoal was produced in town. Although there were probably several charcoal pits, one has been substantiated as it is mentioned in the diary of A.G.

Williams, a copy of which is in the Historical Society. He stated that he helped for a time in the operation of a pit located off the old Hubbardston-Petersham turnpike.

The need for many kegs caused the manufacture of that item to thrive in the Barre area. A keg shop at East Barre Falls, owned by Silas H. Britt and later by James Leathers, and the Elisha Webb mill in Nichewaug consistently produced kegs for the powder mills. "S. Heald and Sons, Maker of Powder Kegs and Pail Machinery" was a frequent advertisement in the *Barre Gazette*. An article during this time referred to "an accident in the powder keg shop of Dexter Dennis" on the Prince River, so we know several mills were in the keg business.

An interesting facet of the attitude of the town toward the mill is that it was seldom mentioned in print. Accounts of men such as Newton Murrow, William McEve, and Lorin Fealbin driving wagon loads of kegs to Hazardville, Connecticut are still extant. No mention was made of the transportation of the filled kegs, which had to be thrilling.

What was written about the mills was adverse, and there was a proclivity to angrily blame the danger and frequent tragedies on the "owners" who were thought not to be residents. The many local affluent families who had an interest in the mills must have paid careful attention to keeping their participation little known in the community. The attitude of the town fathers was clearly shown by their continued refusal to accept a road from the Powder Mill area directly to the center of town. Finally, the acceptance was forced by the County Commissioners.

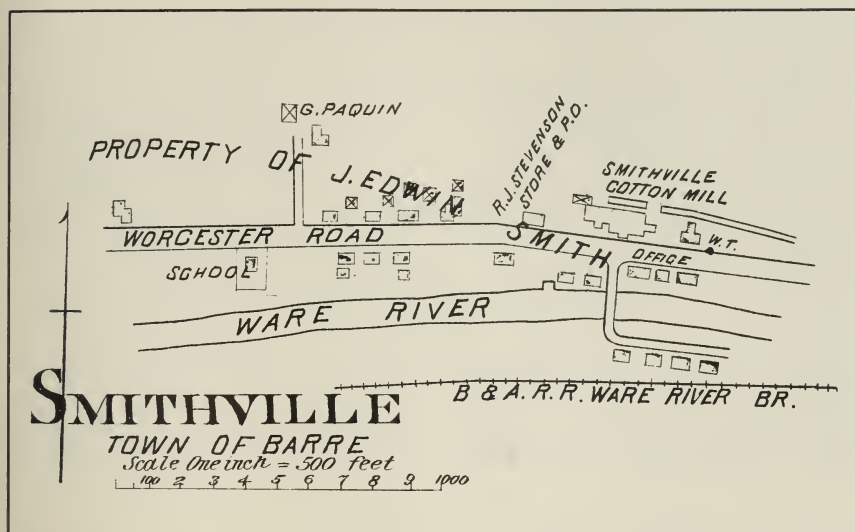
Perhaps the opinion of the town was summed nicely by a speaker at the Centennial Celebration on June 17, 1874 who said: "And why should you be wearied with the various fortunes of the Bemis Powder Mill, the tons of 'villainous saltpetre' it consumed, the number of times it was blown up and rebuilt, its profits in money, its losses in men: or how, at last it went up never to come down again."

His tale of how the mill came to an end may not be quite accurate, yet today all that remains of this prosperous industry are the ruins of the canal, the mill races, wheel pits, and a tin storage container in the Historical Society Collection that bears the names of A. G. Fay, Potter and Cilley and the trademark "Dead Shot."

CLARK'S MILLS, SMITHVILLE OR WHITE VALLEY

The story of this village its fortunes, failures, and fate is similar to that of so many others in New England; it is inseparable from the story of its mill.

It was not until 1824 that an attempt was made to place a dam across the Ware River in this area. The size of the dam that was necessary and the continual year-round flow of water made the project a considerable



Smithville/White Valley



Freeman's Store and Post Office, Smithville/White Valley

undertaking. Benjamin Clark, a local merchant, succeeded in completing a dam and canal in the stretch of the Ware River just downstream from the bridge on the Barre-Rutland road. At the same time, Silas Bemis started a dam and canal below Clark's dam. Each merchant was

racing to complete his project before the other. Litigation ensued concerning "flowage damage," and although Bemis was awarded money, Clark bought the water rights. Then he proceeded to build a mill, stores, tenements, boarding houses, and residences that were all clustered around the mill and along the river.

Clark soon became financially overextended. In 1832 he organized a stock company which was called the Boston and Barre Manufacturing Company. It consisted mainly of the Messrs. Mixer of Hardwick, Woods of Barre, Bowman of New Braintree, and Clark.

Machinery was installed, and the manufacture of cotton cloth began. Unfortunately, the company did not succeed. In seeking a solution, the partners managed to sign Mr. John Smith to a contract to oversee the operation. It was a fortuitous hiring.

John Smith was an English cotton millwright who had followed Slater to Pawtucket. After he installed machinery and operations there, he acquired a mill in Shirley, Massachusetts. He evidently saw a better opportunity in Barre, as he soon became a resident.

Under his tutelage, the mill in Barre began to make a profit. After a few successful years, there was a serious fire that destroyed the mill. The corporation could not afford to rebuild, so the property was sold at public auction. The highest bidder was John Smith, who had found a few men willing to back him. The mill was rebuilt, and John Smith, who used perseverance, energy and keen business sense, was soon able to reimburse his backers, and he became a wealthy man. He was well admired by the people of Barre and the surrounding towns, and he was elected to the General Court. After twenty-four years of toil in his adopted town, John Smith's life ended tragically by his own hand in 1859.

John Smith had been an active Baptist and was a determining force in building a new Baptist Church within walking distance of the mills. He encouraged all of his employees to attend church. It was through his initiative and with his money that a plot of land was purchased from Hiram Harwood for the Coldbrook Cemetery. According to reports, both John and his wife Clarissa (Worcester) were interred in the Coldbrook Cemetery, but later his son had the bodies removed to Worcester.

The mill and the village came under the joint ownership of his two sons, Charles Worcester Smith and J. Edwin Smith. Sometime later when Charles W. Smith died, the mill was idled during the settlement of his estate. J. Edwin Smith then became sole owner. He made some alterations in the mill, and the manufacturing process was begun at the mill again. By this time, the village was universally referred to as Smithville.

The mill prospered and J. Edwin Smith became active in attempts to



Cotton Mill, Smithville/White Valley



*Smithville/White Brothers/Boston and Barre Manufacturing Co.,
Smithville/White Valley, 1896*

bring rail service to the area. He was appointed to the Boards of Directors of both the Ware River Branch Railroad and the Massachusetts Central Railroad. At the height of his prosperity he moved to Worcester and was a successful businessman there as well.

Upon his death, the mills in Barre became idle again. The White Brothers of Winchendon Springs and Jaffrey, New Hampshire purchased the factory and all that went with it from the Smith estate. The Whites

manufactured cotton denim, and they proved most successful. All the boarding houses and tenements that surrounded the mill and the factory buildings were maintained with stately trees planted at even intervals along the main road whitewashed to a height of four feet. Newspapers of the time considered "White Valley" to be a model mill village which was attractive and productive.

At all stages of development the village had a school. When known as Clark's Mills, there was a bridge that spanned the river just downstream from where a narrow footbridge is located today. This road veered to the right, paralleled the river for a short distance, turned off to the south climbing a steep hill, and continued to Oakham. Today it is a barely discernible path, interrupted by two different railroad beds which are now disused. On this road near the river stood a schoolhouse. The second and third schoolhouses were located approximately where the roadside rest area is on Route 122 today. The third building was sold and converted into a residence which has remained a home.

The first post office in the area was established in Coldbrook on April 12, 1832, changed to Smithville on May 14, 1850, to Coldbrook on December 20, 1853, to Smithville on September 5, 1861, and then to White Valley on January 27, 1900. Finally, it was discontinued on January 28, 1938. It is uncertain how many of these changes were actual changes of quarters or simply name changes.

There was a gradual decrease in demand for the overall material manufactured in White Valley. The company was operating in a limited fashion when in 1925 the Metropolitan District Commission purchased the mill and all its property. Operations ceased, and soon all the buildings were razed except the weave plant which was converted to a garage and maintenance office for the MDC. At the time of the demolition of the buildings, only sixteen families remained in the area.

Today an imposing stone and steel building houses an intake shaft that directs Ware River overflow down a spiral tube to an aqueduct tunnel where the water can be diverted either westerly to the Quabbin Reservoir in Hardwick or easterly to the Wachusett Reservoir in Boylston.

Little remains of the village that had borne three names. A few of the old roads, foundations, and railroad beds remain but are disappearing slowly. The only thing burgeoning in the area is the privately owned landfill which is rapidly covering some of the old landmarks of the village.

SILK RAISING

One of the most unusual types of industry that was introduced in Barre was that of silk raising. About 1825, a government manual on silk culture became quite popular. According to Matthew Walker, the

Chinese mulberry tree was made available to those interested in the project. About 1835 or 1836, Elijah Whiting, who then lived on the site of the present Charles G. Allen IV residence, purchased the mulberry plant and began the development of a mulberry tree farm. He obtained the worms from a neighboring community, built some small sheds, and set the worms to work. About an acre of his farm was planted in mulberry.

The industry partially succeeded, but due to inexperience of silk harvesting from the cocoon, much of the web was destroyed.

The project lasted about three or four years before it was abandoned. The mulberry bushes were in evidence for many years at the farm and remnants of the plants still exist on the Allen property. From these feeble attempts at silk raising, mills were established in several areas. One of these mills was established in Northampton where silk goods of all types were made.

This project although not successful as a Barre industry shows Yankee ingenuity and the desire to build successful and inventive farms.

PUBLICATIONS OF BARRE

Prior to 1834, nearly all official notices of auctions, land takeovers, and items of importance in Barre would be found in the pages of Isaiah Thomas' *Massachusetts Spy* printed in Worcester. The *Spy* newspaper office also did job printing and sold stationery and legal forms of various types.

Responding to a need, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Thompson, founded the *Farmer's Gazette* and published the first issue in Barre on May 20, 1834 in a small building on South Street. Thompson, born in 1808, was the editor and publisher. He was a Barre native, son of the Reverend James and Debby Thompson. The newspaper was printed on an Acorn press, now on exhibit at the Barre Historical Society. The four-page weekly consisted of stories and general editorials which had been copied from other papers, and assorted items on politics and agriculture. The last two pages were largely auction sales, foreclosures, general advertising and an occasional local item or vital statistic. The publication was considered a "family newspaper" and by 1835 boasted of having over 800 subscribers. Barre was one of nine towns in Worcester County which had a newspaper prior to 1840.

Albert Alden, a young engraver from Barnstable, Massachusetts, had come to Barre as an associate of Thompson. On the front page of the first issue of the *Farmer's Gazette* was an engraving of Alden's, *Remarkable Water Falls in Barre*, which depicted the falls and cascades on Dick or Galloway Brook.

After Thompson's untimely death in 1838, Alden's name appeared as editor and publisher of the *Barre Gazette*, a name credited to Alden.



Collage of Barre Gazettes

He also owned and managed the Barre Book Store which was a book and stationery shop where he sold wood cuts, engravings, and stationery supplies. Several examples of Alden's work are in the files of the Barre Historical Society.

In the fall of 1839, the *Barre Gazette* ownership was transferred to Walter August Bryant, who had been associated with Alden. Bryant, an able young lawyer born in New Salem, married Lydia Thompson in 1842. Lydia was the daughter of the Reverend James and Debby Thompson and sister of C.C.P. Thompson, the original editor and publisher of the *Gazette*. Bryant had been appointed the postmaster of Barre in 1839. This was a position that he kept until his removal and replacement by his brother, Nahum F. Bryant. In 1843, Nahum was also removed from office, and Walter was reinstated at a later date. Walter Bryant served in the Great and General Court from 1846 to 1848. Both Bryant brothers held very strong and opposing political views. Under Walter Bryant's ownership, the *Barre Gazette* was enlarged to a six column sheet.

In 1844, Nahum F. Bryant established a newspaper called the *Barre Patriot*, an organ of the Whig Party and, according to an article in the *Barre Gazette*, the columns showed the "political as well as the personal hatred" of the two brothers. A local news column was introduced by Walter Bryant in the *Barre Gazette*, a practice which continued throughout the years. Bryant sold the *Gazette* in 1848 to Edward Avery and, according to the *Chattel Mortgage Book* of that period, Samuel and John C. Avery were also mentioned in the ownership of the *Barre Gazette* newspaper "establishment, printing office, presses, type, all materials of said paper plus the job printing, subscription lists and advertising patronage." Walter Bryant removed to Worcester in 1849 and died in Paris in 1852 at the age of 31 years.

The Avery period of ownership was a short one. The mortgage was transferred from Walter Bryant's heirs to his brother, Nahum F. Bryant, editor and publisher of the *Barre Patriot* who had published the *Barre Gazette* for nine years. Nahum Bryant, also a lawyer, served as State Senator in 1847 and 1848. He married Roxanna Washburn of Vernon, Vermont. Under his ownership, the two papers merged and the *Barre Patriot* ceased to exist. Nahum sold the *Barre Gazette* and became the superintendent of the Grand Trunk Railway, "a profitable branch of the Boston and Albany railroad" and removed from the town.

Bryant was a prolific originator of several publications which lasted a very short time. The *Wachusett Star* and *Bryant's Messenger*, the latter a monthly magazine, were examples of publications that moved into other communities. In 1858, the *Household Monthly Magazine* was printed, but its history was much like that of the others and it folded. An offshoot of the *Barre Gazette* was the *Worcester West Chronicle* which was established in May 1865 by R.W. Waterman, a former employee of the *Gazette*. Along with the newspaper, Bryant started his own job printing office. The November 16, 1866 issue of the *Barre Gazette* reported the cessation of the publication of the *Worcester West Chronicle* after "an existence of less than 10 months." It moved to Athol where it was one of the major newspapers for years.

In 1888, the *Central Courier* was introduced into Barre under the management of S.H. Ingersoll. It was not printed in Barre, but it had a substantial number of subscribers in the town during its short life.

In 1860, J. Henry Goddard, born in Petersham and an associate editor under Bryant, became editor and publisher. The printing office was in Old Colonnade, a building that had formerly been the Old Meeting House. That structure had been moved off the Common to a location near the junction of Broad and School Streets and housed many small shops and businesses. Goddard was publisher during the Civil War and was given great credit for the manner in which he reported events of that period. A disastrous fire in 1862 destroyed the Colonnade and most of

the contents. The *Barre Gazette* issued a single sheet extra which reported the fire and the parties that suffered the losses. The extra and several of the following issues were printed in Worcester, which presented great difficulties especially in the transportation over rough roads, of the setup type. The *Gazette* continuity went unchallenged.

Next came Henry H. Cook and D. Lyman Crandall, the latter serving as editor. Cook, a brother of James O. Cook of Barre, bought Crandall's interest and remained the sole owner until 1891. Along with the printing of the *Gazette*, much of the work involved job printing of town reports, blank forms, social programs, tax receipts, etc. Numerous samples are in the files of the Historical Society.

Charles E. Rogers, a former resident of Barre, left town in 1872 and went to Boston. In 1874, according to his obituary notice in 1931, he married Mary J. Williams, returned to Barre in 1889, and purchased the *Barre Gazette* with Fred A. Pitcher. Rogers bought Pitcher's interest, and Rogers was listed as editor and publisher until 1901 when he sold the paper and returned to Dedham. From 1901 to 1914, the *Gazette* was under the ownership of Jennie C. Spooner. She had been associated with the paper under Henry Cook and was no stranger to its operation. In 1918, Jennie Spooner married Charles H. Follansby, who had erected a 40' by 60' building on the site of the old Desper Shop behind the post office. The second floor was specifically designed as quarters for the *Barre Gazette* establishment which it occupied for several years. The first floor housed Fessenden's Grain Store and Ballou's Tin Shop. That building today is the Post #2 Legion Building on Mechanic Street.

In March 1914, Charles Gustavus Rogers of Dedham became the new owner of the *Barre Gazette*. Gus Rogers was the fourth son of a previous owner, Charles E. Rogers. Gus Rogers directed the paper through World War I. He contracted the dreaded influenza and died in February 1920 at the age of thirty-two. He is buried in Glen Valley Cemetery.

Gardner Boyd, also from Dedham, was a classmate and personal friend of Gus Rogers. He had visited Barre several times prior to his acquiring the *Barre Gazette* from Rogers' heirs in 1920. His wife, Lucile Blanchard Boyd, was a teacher at Barre High School and served as associate editor from 1920 to 1925. Boyd wrote in 1934 in the 100th Anniversary edition of the *Barre Gazette* that when electricity failed, the presses were inoperable. Ben Harrington produced an automobile engine and rigged it to the presses in the press room. Special care had to be taken with this arrangement. The presses had to be stopped every two hundred copies in order to let the engine cool down. Under Boyd, the *Gazette* was enlarged to an eight page, six column paper. Boyd also related that it was the employees, such as Charles Scott, Louise Barry, Elizabeth A. Murphy, and the McAndrew brothers, that educated and

acquainted the new owners of the paper to the intricacies and routines of running a small town newspaper.

In early January 1925, Irving F. Carpenter, not a stranger to the *Barre Gazette*, became the editor and publisher. Carpenter, a lawyer and native of Somerville, had represented Rogers' heirs sometime earlier when the paper was sold to Boyd. Carpenter purchased the Parson Dana house on South Street (later known as the Work residence house #358) where he resided with his wife and sons.

In early 1927, Charles W. Pierce, a native of Manchester, Vermont and a member of a newspaper family, became the editor and publisher of the *Barre Gazette*. His daughter, Catherine Pierce Hiller, served as assistant editor. It was while the Pierces were in the stewardship that the outstanding fifty-six page 100th Anniversary edition of the *Barre Gazette* was published in May 1934. In that edition, excerpts from early issues appeared, making a most interesting historical record of Barre. The Pierce family lived in the Lee-Holman house just west of the Library. The *Gazette* office and printing establishment were located in the ell at the rear of the main structure.

In 1949, Alden Porter Johnson of Worcester purchased the *Barre Gazette* newspaper and printing office. Johnson, born in 1912, was the grandson of one of the founders of Norton Company in Worcester. He was an avid sportsman, not only as an oarsman, but in the racing car field as well. He was extremely artistic and had a keen interest in history.

His list of able editors enabled the *Gazette* to become a local paper of high caliber. Al Mason was succeeded by Barton T. Pevear. After Pevear's death in 1954, he was succeeded by his wife, Alice Cogan Pevear, herself an able newspaper person who had previously worked many years for a well known publication in New York City. In 1956, a new one-story building was constructed on South Street just south of Stetson Home where the *Barre Gazette* establishment plus the job printing and book publishing business moved in 1957. Johnson founded the Barre Publishing Company. He sold the newspaper to Matthew Trifilo in 1966. He retained the Barre Publishing Company and the Imprint Society which he had established in 1970. The latter published numerous volumes of great artistic and historic value, several of which became prize winners in the publishing field.

Alden Johnson died in 1972 at the age of sixty years and the Barre Publishing Company, the Barre Imprint Society, and all the printing fixtures and furnishings were sold by his heirs. Trifilo kept the *Gazette* only for a period of a year and sold it in 1967 to the *Ware River News of Ware*, which was later known as *Turley Publications*. This company published numerous small town weeklies in the area.

The *Barre Gazette* has been printed in town for 147 years except the past fourteen years and briefly when emergencies forced it to be done

elsewhere. The *Gazette* still has an office in Barre where correspondents can submit their news items, releases, and advertising. According to the present *Barre Gazette*, it covers the towns of Barre, Hubbardston, Hardwick, Oakham, New Braintree, North Brookfield, and Petersham. There have been other publications which have been established, blossomed for a while, and then disappeared. Sometimes the newspapers would be established in another town.

Perhaps it is because Barre was so well covered by the printed word that the need for a book on the history of the town has only lately been realized. Newspapers recorded the growth and history of the town as well as informed its readers of state and national affairs.

RAILROADS

One of the truly significant achievements of the nineteenth century that contributed to the industrialization of America was the perfection of the steam locomotive and the development of a rail system.

In Massachusetts the rails first spread westward from Boston to Westborough when the Western Railroad opened in 1834. By July of the next year the rails had reached Worcester. Speeds as high as nineteen miles per hour were reported. Patronage was high despite the fact that passengers were often required to leave their coaches and help push the struggling train over the rise of a steep grade. They would then hop back on the train to continue their journey. All along the route, the Western Railroad brought industrial growth and progress. As the rail reached Springfield in 1840, the line helped to increase the population of that city from 7,000 to 11,000 in the next five years.

Perhaps it was the dream of a growing metropolis that caused several enthusiastic parties in Barre to press for a railroad as early as 1847. The proposed route was from Gardner, to Princeton, to Barre, and through the village of Coldbrook. Plans proceeded, and although the Boston, Barre, and Gardner Railroad was completed as far as a station in Princeton near the Hubbardston line, it was never completed. In 1851, the line was released from the promise to build a section to Barre. A stage line from Barre was placed in operation, met the train at the Princeton Depot, and conveyed passengers. This stage helped to reduce the time expended for a trip to Boston.

In 1854, the town of Barre petitioned the state legislature for permission to commit a sum of money to the Barre-North Brookfield Railroad. A committee of three composed of Edward Denny, James Jenkins, Jr., and Nahum Bryant, all from Barre, was appointed to appear before the legislature. Once again the idea never came to fruition.

When news of the possibility of two railroads through Barre began to appear in publications in the 1860s, the information was received with



Station Street, Barre Plains

skepticism as reflected by comments in the *Barre Gazette*. Other plans had come to no outcome. One of the two proposed lines, known as the Ware River Railroad, had been chartered in 1850. Engineering problems and adverse economic conditions had postponed the building of the rails for many years. The Ware River Railroad ran into opposition from other lines already operating, and so for fifteen years the project had lain dormant.

Then in 1867 an act creating the Ware River Railroad was signed into law. The project was divided into four sectors as follows: 1. Palmer to Gilbertville, 2. Gilbertville to Barre, 3. Barre to Baldwinville, and 4. Baldwinville to Winchendon. J. Edwin Smith of Barre was on the first Board of Directors, and private subscriptions began to accumulate quickly. A plan to have the railroad go to the East Barre Falls was received enthusiastically as that area was still considered to be prime location for industrial growth. A.N. Smith was ordered to proceed with construction. He boldly promised that trains would be running to Ware by 1870 and to Winchendon by December 1871. As with other railroads, the construction phase was fraught with difficulties. Before the line was completed, financial disaster was narrowly averted by manipulating funds.

The next fall, on October 16, 1868, another group of interested backers met in Barre to discuss the feasibility of a railroad from Boston that would run west to the Hudson River. This resulted in a law that was passed on May 10, 1869, which created the Massachusetts Central Railroad with offices in Boston. Three of the twelve directors of the newly formed company were from Barre: Elam B. Shattuck, J. Edwin

Smith, and Hiram Wadsworth. The latter two men were textile manufacturers in the Barre section of the Ware River Valley. Mr. Smith served on both railroad boards. He was committed to guarantee that a railroad would be part of Barre. Through the railroad network, raw products would be transported to Barre and finished products would find a way into the economic community.

The town subscribed \$90,000 in stock while individuals all along the proposed route invested in the endeavor. Many of the more substantial investments influenced the location of the roadbed. An investor wanted the road to pass close to his business to insure cheap and easy loading and unloading of freight cars. Residents of Barre were promised that a branch would come within a short distance of the center village with a station located at the foot of the present Summer Street.

Work on this latter line progressed quite well. The Ware River Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad passed through the southern section of town with stations at Barre Plains, Barre Station (on Depot Road), and Coldbrook Village. Flag stations were established at various points along the line to handle milk, lumber, and grain. There was no station at Smithville (White Valley). A station at Coldbrook Village on the Barre side of the Ware River could handle freight for both villages. The original plan to have the line built to the East Barre Falls ran into engineering problems that caused the efforts to be abandoned. Instead, the route ran north in the Burnshirt River Valley and all the way to Hubbardston and beyond.

By 1873 the Ware River branch was fully graded into Coldbrook. The first section from Palmer to Gilbertville was finished in 1869. Before the year ended, the track was open to Winchendon. The last section was delayed due to lack of subscribers. At that time most of the "smart money" was being invested in a direct line that was an east-west route through Fitchburg to Boston.

The Ware River branch stayed west of the river and through Wheelwright. It crossed the main road between Barre and Ware just northwest of the village and river, the location being not too far from Barre Plains. It proceeded eastward near the dwellings in South Barre and emerged from the residential area to run parallel to the Ware River on the south bank. Just east of the mills in Smithville, it curved northward, crossed the river, and passed between the Baptist Church and parsonage. All this was within the town boundaries of Barre. This route in the Ware-Burnshirt Valley progressed well. A moderate amount of fill and no major bridges were required. One small trestle spanned the Ware River near Coldbrook and was only a few feet above the water.

In October 1872, the *Barre Gazette* was able to report that "the trains are running on the Ware River Railroad through this place. No accidents have happened...at least no trains have run off the tracks since

the road was constructed, nor with the careful management will any be probable.”

Another source stated that in 1874 “one railroad has been completed and is in operation through Barre and another coming...sometime.” The *Barre Gazette* reported that “members of a Sunday School group from Palmer and Monson along with their friends totaling 500 people enjoyed a picnic at the village of Coldbrook by traveling back and forth on the train.”

That same year the 4:37 a.m. train on the Ware River Railroad “killed a nice ox belonging to the heirs of Edward Denny. The employees of the railroad dressed the ox, and the beef being sold will considerably lessen the loss to the company.”

On the Ware River Railroad time table that was dated October 20, 1879, the schedule showed two trains arriving daily from Winchendon at both Coldbrook and Barre Plains. Three passenger trains left daily from Palmer to Barre Plains. C.O. Russell was listed as superintendent, and the Ware River Railroad office was located in Springfield.

The other line, the Massachusetts Central Railroad, was progressing more slowly. Through the fall and winter of 1870 the chief engineer of the project was in the field with his survey team. In 1871 a contract was signed with Norman C. Munson of Shirley to construct the railroad to Northampton.

At this point it became apparent to subscribers that their enthusiasm for the conditions originally pictured by the company was ill advised. The survey and contract terms revealed that not only did the railroad not run where it had been promised, but the stations were located two miles from the center. The branch line which had been promised to elicit funds was scrapped entirely. The idea of a railroad at the foot of Summer Street was a lost dream.

The first grading for the road bed was done in Hardwick in 1871. The financial panic of 1873 caused great losses. A complete financial reorganization was effected. The new directors included prominent men of New York and Boston. Munson rehired workers and construction started anew.

The projected route entered the town from Wheelwright and bridged the Ware River just east of Wheelwright. The route was to pass into Barre south of the river, and the tracks were to converge with those of the Ware River line. There was a station and milk platform in close proximity to one of the other roads. The roadbed between Barre Plains and New Braintree had been altered to allow the Ware River Railroad to cross the highway on grade, and the Central Massachusetts railroad was to run under a bridge a short distance south of the other line.

For several miles the two roadbeds ran nearly parallel past the Barre Depot where the railroad lines each had a station. Just east of these stations the Central Massachusetts line began to veer away from the river



B & A Railroad, Barre Plains



Central Railroad, Barre Plains

and to climb steadily. A large trestle was necessary to cross a ravine in this segment of the tracks before the tracks crossed the Oakham Road about a quarter of a mile from Coldbrook Springs. At this point there was a station just east of the road. The railroad continued in an easterly direction and crossed Cold Brook a couple of times before traversing Muddy Pond and Long Pond into West Rutland. The massive fills across these bodies of water, a high trestle over the road just before the West Rutland station, and a long, deep cut through granite as the line passed through Charnock Hill made this passage an extremely difficult

construction project. This was one of the last sections to be completed.

In reporting the construction work, the *Barre Gazette* stated that "in nearly thirty different places the line from Waltham to Northampton had parties of laborers now busily engaged in leveling hills, filling valleys, bridging streams, hewing forest with might and power, are smiting asunder the rocky barriers which nature has interposed against the swift Yankees who are determined ever to seek the most direct way between east and west....Work on the cuts is mostly by carts and horses although in some instances a portable railway with small dump cars is used. The most laborious sections of the work are those between valleys of the Ware and Swift Rivers in the towns of Hardwick and Rutland."

Despite this report of great activity, readers and editors expressed their disgust at broken promises and continued delays. The years passed, and the road bed seemed no nearer to completion. Numerous meetings were held between railroad officials and town officials that were relative to types and locations of crossings and bridges in the town.

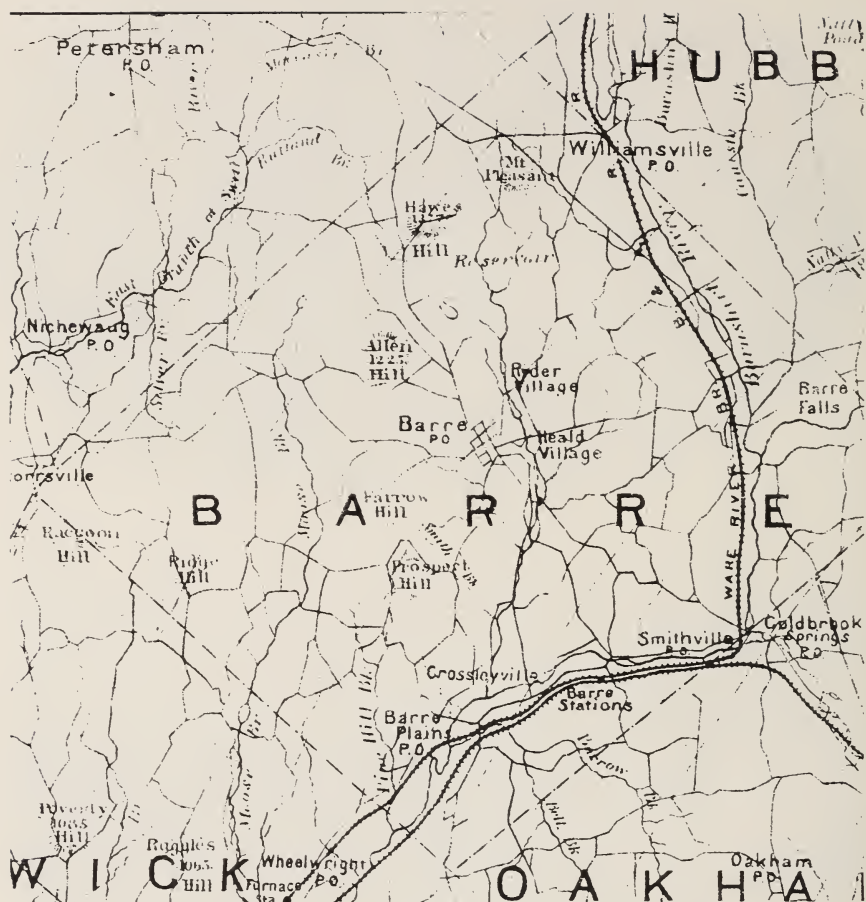
In both 1876 and 1877 the town even threatened to withdraw support of the Massachusetts Central. A letter to the editor of the *Barre Gazette* irately expressed the writer's feelings: "No Mass Central Railroad in the town of Barre yet...not a shovel in the ground nor a stone overturned." He also wrote of the uncertainty of the route selection and the unusual location of the depots.

In March 1882, Dr. George Brown and Charles Brimblecom were appointed to negotiate the questions of subscription and payments due to the Mass. Central from the town. Committees were chosen to study the terms of the railroad debts. Years later it was unanimously voted to sell 900 shares of Mass. Central stock for \$21.00 per share with the income to revert to the town.

After years of struggle and disappointment, the Mass. Central was leased to the Boston and Lowell Railroad which in turn was leased to the Boston and Maine Railroad. The corporation reorganized as the Central Mass. Railroad and continued work on the route. On November 8, 1886 the final rails were put down in Rutland. The complete route was finally consummated. On December 12, 1887 the first train to travel the length of the Mass. Central went from Boston to Northampton with a special car for the dignitaries. Many people used the passenger service over the years. The most famous commuter was Calvin Coolidge who regularly traveled from his home in Northampton to the governor's office in Boston.

An account of how the railroad was built through Barre is difficult to reconstruct, as news of the process was practically non-existent in the local papers. Only the disasters seemed to make their way into print. Very little coverage was devoted to the enormous undertaking of the two railroads being constructed in the same era.

Immigrants were brought to town as the major part of the labor



force. These laborers were mostly Italians and Irishmen who toiled and lived within the town. As a transient group little was mentioned of them, despite the fact that they numbered in the hundreds.

According to the *Barre Gazette* in 1873, the Ware River Railroad had a shanty town within the town limits which was located near the village of Coldbrook. While the construction was in progress the companies pledged to the communities through which they passed that an effort would be made not to disturb the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood. Thus, shanty towns were built to keep the workers segregated.

As predicted, numerous businesses developed along the railroad lines. New factories were built for direct loading and unloading of freight cars. The coming of the railroads had other effects also. The faster means of transportation ensured that farm produce would reach a population center before spoiling. There had previously been a surplus

of milk, and the urgency for the utilization of this excess milk had resulted in the establishment of several cheese factories in the area. Now this problem was alleviated and consequently many of the cheese factories ceased to function. During berry season, the milk trains added cars to carry crates of blueberries to the Boston market. Picking berries to be shipped on a "blueberry special" was a chore that brought families the income to purchase children's school clothes for the fall.

To conserve food the general use of iceboxes for the home and refrigerator cars for the trains appeared. This led to the cutting of ice and the need for storage of the ice in every town. Ice houses were constructed on the shores of ponds near the railroads. Often the morning train would be the vehicle that workers would travel to the ice harvests. These men would pack the ice in the houses and then return home on the train in the evening.

Local sawmills had been presented with an effective and cheap way to ship their lumber to market. They also had a market for a by-product of the mill which was the sawdust that was used for packing the ice to impede the melting process.

The railroad also provided a reasonably priced and quick way for city residents to leave the heat and their crowded conditions for a summer sojourn in the country. Many hill towns along the rail lines became a mecca for summer guests. Stagecoaches met the trains to transfer mail, baggage, and passengers to these summer retreats. Hotels such as the Massasoit, Naquag, the Hotel Barre, and the Brunswick offered the traveler rest and relaxation. A bowling alley and a golf course near Houghton Hill were built for the guests at the Barre Hotel.

The trains brought the affluent city dweller to the "summer place". These families had purchased the old farmhouses and neglected residences. The places became the ideal place to spend a few months of each year in the fresh, country air. Many of these summer places were located in the northern and western parts of the town. Upper Pleasant Street



Passenger train at the Barre Plains Station 1962

and the Dana Road areas were considered especially pleasant areas. Often these homes would hire help to run the farm and become large model farm operations. A few of the out of town taxpayers listed in the early part of the century were: Jacob Riis of New York, Colonel William Gaston and Arthur C. Walworth of Boston, General Samuel Chamberlain, Charles N. Winship, C.S. Root, George H. Lane, Henry A. Pevear of Lynn, George H. Ellis of West Newton, and Thomas J. Sturtevant and Carrie A. Verges, both of Wellesley Farms.

The railroads reached their zenith about 1920. The appearance of the automobile and truck increased the shipping speed of passengers and goods. Trucks could drive directly to a mill or market and did not require the added burden of the shipper to haul to and from the rail lines. By 1927 passenger service on the railroad was showing a drastic reduction. The freight train was the sole paying proposition. As the automobile became the prevalent mode of travel, the network of improved roads grew and main thoroughfares became macadamized. People could venture to more distant resorts. The rural summer homes were abandoned. Artificial ice and refrigeration units replaced the ice. Ice houses were no longer needed, fell into disrepair, or were burned to the ground.

The golden age of railroads was over. The railroads in Barre were used less and less. Segments of the lines were abandoned. The hurricane of 1938 destroyed many bridges. The Central Massachusetts tracks were idled forever. At a later date the Ware River Branch shut all operation from Barre to Winchendon. The tracks were removed. A segment of the line still stretches from Palmer to Barre over which a few trains proceed at irregular intervals.

CHURCHES



“That the churches of the town recognize one common inheritance, and labor closely together...for the church is not only the house of God, it is also the home of the people.”

Rev. Harding Gaylord, 1927

FIRST PARISH TO 1833

One of the stringent rules and regulations set by the legislature for the establishment of a town was one that mandated the designation of a lot for the construction of the meeting house and another lot for the home of the minister. The meeting house was necessary for the saving of the inhabitants' souls through the established religion and was also the seat of local government.

In the Northwest District of Rutland, the original site for the meeting house was just southwest of the present intersection of Pleasant Street and Washburn Road. The fact that this location was deemed unacceptable was unknown for the actual construction point was opposite the end of Mechanic Street in a presently paved area.

In the summer of 1742, the proprietors sought someone to build and raise a frame of a meeting house and to determine the dimensions. There was also the problem of providing “preaching” for the people in residence. The former task had to be postponed until a sawmill could be established on a suitable site. One of the stipulations upon the operation of the first mill was that it supply boards for the meeting house at three pounds old tenor per thousand, which was one pound less than the ordinary fee.

The procurement of a visiting preacher was sporadic. John Caldwell obtained “one mortl’s preaching” in the winter of 1743. Many sabbaths were observed in individual homes with no minister in attendance. The proprietors allowed the settlers to choose their own committee to obtain preaching for one year. They gave the committee 90 pounds old tenor for that purpose.

This method of meeting the religious needs of the small community continued until January 1749. At that time it was voted to insert a clause in the petition for town status which asked for permission to assess a tax for five years on land only, except the school and church lots, for the purpose of erecting a meeting house, settling a minister, and clearing

roads. Although the settlement was only granted district status, it was given the right of taxation in order to proceed with the church. The community at this time was comprised of approximately thirty families and one hundred persons.

According to Matthew Walker, the church was organized in July 1753. The following October the first pastor of the "Congregational Church and Society in Rutland District" was selected. The choice was the Reverend Mr. Thomas Frink, a graduate of Harvard University, class of 1722. He had been the first minister in Rutland, was ordained there on November 1, 1727, and served as that town's pastor for thirteen years. Why his tenure was terminated in Rutland is unclear, but he did not leave the town to take another position. It was four years before he became the pastor of the Third Church of Plymouth, a Separate Church composed of secessionists from the First Church. He returned to Rutland in 1748. Mr. Frink was married to the former Isabel Wright and was the father of ten children.

It is difficult to assess Reverend Frink's ministries in the Northwest District with the sketchy material available. It has been said that his mercurial temper made him unfit for the ministry despite his great intellectual capacity. Whatever his abilities and character, it is plain that his tenure was marked by strife. His salary of 53 pounds, 8 shillings, 6 quid was not always met on time during his early years causing continual friction. Not all parishioners agreed with all of his theology, particularly in regard to baptism. The situation worsened over the years, and at a town meeting a majority voted for Mr. Frink's dismissal. Mr. Frink, because of his position, held the office of moderator and refused to concur with the vote. Trapped in a frustrating position, the people succeeded in having a "mutual" or ecclesiastical council called to investigate and weigh the complaints.

Reverend Stephen Williams of Springfield was moderator. The Reverend Dr. Mahew of Boston was the scribe. A council of important pastors and lay delegates heard the evidence regarding the charges levied against Mr. Frink by some of people of the district. The task was difficult and feelings were bitter. The process took six long days. On June 18, 1766 the council found Mr. Frink guilty of nine of the ten charges.

The charges included Mr. Frink's tendency to deal arbitrarily with members for he chastised some people while ignoring others. He was charged with using "harsh language," defaming fellow ministers, interfering with private matters, denying certain persons the right to speak and vote at meetings, and adjourning meetings against the wishes of those present.

In the light of their decision, the council recommended that the relationship between the district and Mr. Frink be dissolved. Accordingly, at the town meeting of July 11th which was held for that purpose, it was

proposed that Mr. Frink be discharged. Surprisingly, the debate was long and heated. Mr. Frink still had his supporters. John Caldwell, moderator of the meeting, called for an hour of adjournment and after the allotted time Caldwell called for a vote by having the ayes and nays separate into groups in the meeting house yard. A majority voted to dismiss Mr. Frink.

John Caldwell was designated to literally "shut up" the pulpit on the following Sunday. As had been suspected, the Rev. Mr. Frink did appear and marched directly to the pulpit where he was "collared" by Caldwell who escorted him out of the meeting house. Mr. Frink began to hold services in his home. Over the next ten years he brought suit in various courts three times before he finally ceased pursuing legal proceedings in 1777. Shortly thereafter he died in Rutland in August of the same year.

In December 1766 with the controversial nature of Mr. Frink's departure from the meeting house in mind, it was recorded that "effectual care be speedily taken that the sacramental vessels be ready and in good order for church use whenever they shall need them and that Deacons Mason and Rice go to Deacon Stone with whom the vessels are and take above speedy and effectual care and report at the next meeting." Not only does a subsequent entry report that the gentlemen succeeded, but there is still in existence a pewter sacramental plate inscribed "Gift to John Mason" as further testimonial. Mason, one of the first deacons of the church, who became selectman, assessor, moderator, and representative to the General Court, migrated to Barre from Newton with his wife, Elizabeth. The Masons had ten children.

The officials of the church and district suffered an irreparable loss, as Mr. Frink took with him the church records for the first thirteen years of its existence. This constituted the earliest records of the government of the town. They were never recovered.

A majority of the members chose Josiah Dana of Pomfret, Connecticut to be the second minister. His letter of acceptance was dated July 9, 1767. He arrived to find that many of his congregation were still doubting the "regularities and validity of Mr. Frink's dismissal" which was expressed by at least two of the leading members of the church, Messrs. Allen and Bullard.

The Rev. Mr. Dana remained pastor of the church until his death in 1801. His 34 year tenure seemed to heal the breach in the congregation. His first wife, Mercy, died in 1787. In 1788 he married Sally, who was a widow and oldest daughter of James Caldwell. The Reverend moved into his second wife's home located on South Street just north of the Buckminster graveyard. He is recorded as having twelve children. His well-written and carefully expressed records survive today and serve to point out the weaknesses and foibles of the townspeople of the eighteenth century.

Through the years members who were dismissed, admitted, or chastised were recorded in the neat, sand-blotted writing of Parson Dana, as he was commonly known. Cases were brought to the church meetings to be decided. Absenteeism from church, baptism outside the local church, personal feuds, and failings amongst the brethren were but a few of the topics discussed and investigated. If these people were adjudicated as "guilty," the individuals were punished according to the church committee's judgment.

In April of 1768 it was voted in a church meeting "that Pomp, a negro servant of Mr. Henry Lee, shall be suspended at present from receiving ye privilege of Baptism, there not appearing sufficient grounds of Charity to receive him." On November 19, 1768 he wrote that "George Aires was denied the Covenant and privilege of said Church" with no reasons for the action noted.

One case that is of the most interest required great tact in recording the charge as it involved a male parishioner's conduct with a widow parishioner. A hearing was set for July of 1774 and "Capt. Benjamin Lee, Capt. Ezra Jones, and Lt. Andrew Parker were appointed as a committee to investigate and report." The committee reported at a later meeting, and the record stated that both of the parishioners were guilty of "lascivious conduct." The widow remarried and moved from the town, but the other party, who remained, asked, and received the forgiveness of his brethren and the church. At the time he was a prominent member of the congregation and also a selectman of the town.

Another incident of human weakness was recorded when it was voted to choose a committee of three to converse with another parishioner "respecting her violation of covenant engagement, in prematurely indulging the passion which ensures a continuance of our species."

The turbulent period after the Revolutionary War was one that had repercussions in the town of Barre. The long war had created great financial difficulties. As the central federal government had not taken charge yet, many people in rural areas were in dire straits. Minor insurrections occurred. One of the best organized was in western Massachusetts where former Captain Daniel Shays led a group that reached some size and did attack some important centers including the arsenal at Springfield. A number of men from Barre participated, and as part of their role in the rebellion they confiscated the town's ammunition from the powder house on James Street. They cached this in Joseph Smith's barn.

Consequently, in October 1787 the First Parish Record Book listed "expressions of uneasiness and dissatisfaction respecting several of the Brethren of the Church who took part in the disturbances of last winter relative to our public affairs." Some stated publicly "their expression of a sense of error and of sorrow relative to said conduct complained of."

This public penance seemed to suffice for their reinstatement to communion. One of the brethren, Richard Mills, who farmed in the west part of town on Great Farm Twenty-seven, was "out of town" when he was asked to appear before the church committee. When Mills was approached, he "did not express any sense of error or sorrow." When he finally presented a declarative in writing to the church, it was promptly voted not to accept it.

In February 1789 he was still seeking restoration to communion, but he would not admit complicity in the stealing of the ammunition even though the committee stated it had evidence proving that he was guilty. The situation dragged with the committee charging "Brother Mills...with immorality in violation of the gospel and voted to send a letter of admonition" to him. In 1791 he was "charged with breach of covenant for not attending meeting." Finally, in August of that year he asked "forgiveness for overt acts in government and civil matters in the winter of 1786-87 and for acting with too great a zeal." The report was accepted and Brother Mills was "reconciled and settled."

During Rev. Dana's pastorate a committee was chosen to plan and build a new meeting house or "to rebuild the old, ugly and inadequate building." It was decided that a new and larger building was required, and it was completed on May 12, 1788. Since it was October, 1790 before "it was voted to pull down the old meeting house," and November when thanks were given to the committee for building a new meeting house, we are not certain as to the exact date when the services were first held in the new edifice, which according to *Whitney's History of Worcester County* was the largest meeting house in the county.

Mr. Dana's home was destroyed by fire in 1793. That year the town voted "to pay the committee for rebuilding Rev. Josiah Dana's house the sum of two pounds, sixteen shillings for the workmen on said house." Subscriptions apparently had not covered the total cost of rebuilding and so the town voted to pay the remaining costs. The question of music in the church began to concern the committee and after several attempts, finally, in 1796 a regular town meeting "granted the front seat in the front gallery and the two short seats in the side gallery for one year" for music. By April 1800 the singers were seeking accompaniment, and a vote was taken "to see if the Church will approve of instrumental music in public worship, particularly the bass viol."

In October 1801 the Rev. Josiah Dana died. A discussion at the town meeting was recorded as to whether or not the town would assume the cost of the mourning. They did vote to pay "for burial robes, burial ceremonies, and digging grave for the late Rev. Dana." He was buried in the graveyard next to his home.

No new pastor was obtained immediately despite several meetings at which disagreements over salary arose. Finally an agent was chosen to

procure a candidate. This resulted in James Thompson coming to Barre, where he delivered his first sermon in October 1803. In November he was hired, and in January 1804 the twenty four year old 1799 graduate of Brown University was ordained. His wife, the former Debora Washburn, bore him nine children in Barre. One of their sons, Charles S., was founder of the *Barre Gazette* in 1834. Reverend Mr. Thompson was responsible for many improvements to the church. Chief among them was the construction of a handsome tower and cupola. This was approved by the town if it could be accomplished by public subscriptions. The subscriptions did not cover the cost, so town money was appropriated the next two years. The project turned out to be most expensive for it cost twice the price of the building itself.

Singers' pews in the front gallery were converted into seats, and the communion table and furniture was upgraded.

The parishioners were justifiably proud of the new steeple and the bell that it contained. Soon complaints were made about the sound that the bell made. The majority of town meeting members concurred in this criticism. In May 1813 it was voted to expend \$100 to recast the bell. The recasting was done in the winter of 1813-14 at Paul Revere's foundry. The cost for the 900 pound bell, tuned to A#, was four hundred thirty dollars.

About this time Mr. Thompson suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never totally recovered. It did not seem to greatly impair his service to the parish.

At this time itinerant preachers or "circuit riders" were making their appearance. Requests began to come for either dismission to churches outside or to newer sects within the town. Theological differences were arising throughout the Commonwealth. Barre was no exception. Former members were renouncing their allegiance to the First Parish Church and refusing to pay the church assessments for maintenance and support of a church to which they did not adhere.

Over the years Mr. Thompson became the subject of severe criticism from many in the church who opposed his Unitarian leanings. In 1824 the Church voted to choose a committee of "five to receive and review all allegations against Rev. James Thompson." These allegations were carefully drawn and presented to the church, listing the reasons for discontent. Of the thirteen allegations, two dealt with matters of theology and the remainder with his public behavior. No action was taken immediately. On August 15, 1827 thirty two persons convened in the home of Dr. Anson Bates and organized the Evangelical Congregational Church of Barre. The thirteen grievances against Mr. Thompson were recorded, and a sizable number of people left the First Parish.

In the early 1830s the Commonwealth of Massachusetts declared against the policy of an established church. Thus, not only was the First

Parish Church deprived of taxation as a source of income, but the town was suddenly without a place to hold town meetings so a "town meeting house had to be built." An era had come to a close.

FIRST PARISH OR UNITARIAN CHURCH

Subsequent to the disestablishment of the First Parish Church as the "town church," the Reverend Thompson continued as pastor. His role in the community, if diminished, was still considerable as he served as a member of the school committee for forty years and served on the examining committee for the schools on numerous occasions. He was a capable speaker and organized several cultural groups, such as the Lyceum which included many of the prominent men of the community. The purpose of the Lyceum was to gather these men who were to meet, discuss and evaluate current trends in moral, cultural, political, and educational fields. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Barre Normal School in 1839.

The main criticism of Mr. Thompson came from those who opposed his Unitarian leanings. Despite these difficulties, he continued as a pastor until 1845 when he was relieved of his major duties but remained the senior pastor until his death on May 14, 1845. He had just celebrated his golden jubilee in the ministry the previous January. In the first 100 years the First Parish had just three pastors and three assistants to Mr. Thompson.

Before his death and interment in Lincoln yard, Mr. Thompson lived to see the second building replaced. The old church had become outmoded, and although a large wood stove had been installed in 1827, the building never heated well.

The July 23, 1847 issue of the *Barre Gazette* revealed that the "old Unitarian meeting house in this town, reserving the tower, clock, bell, stonework, etc., were sold in public auction to Mr. Daniel Bacon for 680 dollars. The society will continue to occupy it until next spring when it is to be removed." In April 1848 construction on the new church had begun. The July 9, 1849 issue of the *Barre Patriot* gave a complete description of the new edifice built on the east side of Broad Street on a lot given by Willard Broad. The building was 79 feet long, 44 feet wide, and 43 feet from top of the basement to the ridge. The tower rose to a height of 66 feet. The spire rose 65 feet higher and was terminated by a gold finial which supported a gilded vane. The entire height from base to tower to the top of the spindle being 145 feet. The committee included Willard Broad, William L. Russell, and Daniel Hawes. Mr. M.G. Wheelock of Boston was the architect. G.L. Rowe was the master builder. The dedication was June 28, 1849.

The old church building was moved to a spot near the corner of



*First Parish Church or The
Unitarian Church, Barre,
dedicated 1849*

Broad and School Streets. It was renovated into a business block of three floors including a basement level. This building was renamed "The Colonnade." It contained a myriad of businesses including stores, a hat manufacturing establishment, the *Barre Gazette*, and a saloon. Fire brought destruction to the Colonnade in 1862.

The Unitarian Church continued successfully to meet the spiritual needs of many residents under a number of different ministers. One minister of particular note was Alvin T. Bailey, a Civil War veteran, who was ordained a minister in 1867 and came to Barre in 1879. The Rev. Mr. Bailey took a great interest in the community. He was a member of the school board, a trustee of the library, and state legislator. As an ex-Union soldier, he took great interest in the veterans of the town and played an active role in the formation of the G.A.R. Post in Barre. He and his family resided in the Unitarian Parsonage, which is presently the Congregational Parsonage on Pleasant Street. After 30 years of service he retired but remained a resident until his death in September, 1918.

In 1930, the First Parish Church steeple was struck by lightning causing much damage to the steeple and to the church itself. After repairs, it was again destroyed in the hurricane of 1938, and the clock

irreparably damaged. A new clock was installed in 1940 by Mrs. John Bartholomew in memory of her husband, who had faithfully wound and cared for the old clock for forty two years. The steeple was never replaced. The tower was redesigned which changed the appearance of the church dramatically. An old horse shed behind the church fell into disrepair and was razed in the 1930s.

In 1953 the First Parish held a 200th anniversary pageant portraying much of the early history of the church. Within a few years, dwindling attendance forced the closing of the church. For a few years an attempt was made to reopen it as a Community Church, but this soon failed. During the 1960s the police chief and a few interested citizens tried to establish a Teen Center, but for various reasons this venture failed. The old building was closed. The organ was dismantled and moved to Virginia. The dishes, pews, lights, and other movable items were distributed to various organizations. The church chandelier was given to the Oakham Congregational Church.

In 1969 the trustees sold the property to Richard E. Beard, who was the owner of Beard Motors, whose property adjoined the church land. The building was razed on September 12, 1969, and the land was made a parking area.

The clock works and bell were removed and stored. When the town celebrated the Bicentennial in 1974, the trustees of the church property made arrangements to have the clock and Revere bell placed in the cupola of the Town Hall. This was done. The old Revere bell, according to specialists on this genre of bell is "historically priceless." The bell had tolled for joyous and solemn occasions for over one hundred years and now strikes the hours from high above the Common.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

The first non-congregational religion to become established in Barre predated the Congregational-Unitarian split by nearly twenty years. The first Baptist on record in the town was Mr. Jonathan Metcalf, formerly a member of the First Parish, who on October 15, 1783 pleaded that "in his judgment, ye Baptist Principle is most agreeable to ye Scriptures." A Baptist Church had been established in Templeton in 1782, and it is probable that Mr. Metcalf made the long trek to worship in Templeton. The Templeton group erected a building in 1799.

Baptist religion really began to flourish early in the nineteenth century when several families from the town of Sutton moved to the eastern part of the township. Sutton had three Baptist churches at this time. These members, desirous of continuing their Baptist faith, began to attend services in Templeton. Soon the number of Baptists increased to the point where a Baptist Church Society was organized in Barre as a

branch of the Templeton Church. At this time there were twenty five members, and they met at Elias Chase's house on August 21, 1811.

The Baptists were required to pay tax to the First Parish as the "town supported" church and to their own society as well. There was no law to protect people from unfair taxation of this sort. A protest was lodged in 1816, and the town was notified of the feelings of the Baptist. On June 17th, thirty five names were listed on the Act of Incorporation of the Barre First Baptist Society. A town meeting was held, and the subject of the tax and incorporation were discussed. It was voted to ignore the tax protests but not oppose the incorporation.

In 1817 the town appointed a committee to consider the legitimacy of the tax. It was the conclusion of the committee that it was unfair to be required to support two churches. The First Parish was advised to choose officers and raise funds for its own support. In the same year the first Baptist meeting was held at Job Sibley's house on March 14th.

A pastor was not settled for many years despite a continual increase in membership. Preaching, however, was never neglected. When a preacher was not available, great stress was laid on religious instruction. A well-known preacher, the Rev. Leonard, made a visitation.

Sometime around 1831, a Baptist Church was built at Adams' Corner at the junction of Covered Bridge Road and Coldbrook Road. A small community of houses and a store were clustered nearby. Situated on the eastern side of the Ware River and sandwiched between the town borders of Hubbardston and Oakham, the church was somewhat isolated from the center of town. Many parishioners had to travel through part of another town on their way to services.

The first meeting held in the new meeting house was on March 4, 1832. The next month the pews were assessed and part of them sold to parishioners. The meeting house was heated by wood stoves and care of the fires and building was in the hands of the church committee.

Rev. John Walker was the minister from 1837 to 1844. During his ministry it was decided that the church should be relocated. A number of homes, mills, and businesses had appeared along Coldbrook near its junction with the Ware River and just across the river within the town boundaries of Barre. This community, of rather indefinite extent, was called Coldbrook.

After due consideration, the church decided against using the old building and planned a larger structure. David Barnes, Joshua Rogers, and John Smith were chosen as a committee to find a suitable piece of land. Smith was owner of mills on the Ware River. As a prominent manufacturer and owner of much land, he exercised a positive influence on the Baptist Church for many years.

The first meeting was held in the village of Coldbrook. When attention was called to the fact that the charter of the church expressly stated

that the Society should be in the town of Barre, a piece of land just across the Ware River and very near to the bridge crossing to Oakham was chosen. This made it convenient for the residents of the Coldbrook area to worship there. The collectors of the church proceeded to acquire funds for the new building.

The old building at Adams Corner was sold and moved to Oakham Center where it was used as a Methodist Church. In 1865 this church disbanded, and the building was sold again. Through the years the structure has seen use as a woodworking shop and cheese factory. Most recently it has been remodeled into tenements.

In 1842 a separate committee was chosen to obtain a bell through subscription to be placed with the new meeting house. The building was built and dedicated in the Winter of 1843-44. The church was two stories high with a basement that could be entered from the outside, as the structure was built into a slight incline. The front of the church had a porch supported by four tall pillars along its full width. A large, shuttered window was set between two doors leading from the porch. Each side of the building had three, small, paned windows with large shutters. The church was surmounted by a belfry, steeple, and finial. A brick chimney was at the rear. Eventually a parsonage and barn were added on the western side of the church property. Like the earlier building, it was heated with wood. The care of the building, maintenance of the wood supply, and heating of the church was on bid. In 1844 it was recorded that Pury Harwood received this contract for ten dollars.

In 1873 the Ware River Railroad was completed from Palmer to Winchendon. The tracks passed between the church and parsonage with a Coldbrook Station a few hundred yards away.

The history of the First Baptist Church had great variations in attendance and membership. Some of the reasons may be obscure at this distance in time, but two are most apparent. First, the Baptist religion of that time worked on a revivalist principle and would often have periods of long and fervent religious interest followed by proportionately stagnant periods of low interest. Periods of little interest resulted in the church being closed from December 1, 1866 to April 21, 1867. Again from January to May 1870 there were no services. In 1872 the fortieth anniversary reawakened interest, but two years later the church was closed again. This pattern was followed throughout the rest of the history of the church.

The second reason for the ebb and flow of the church can be attributed to the ups and downs of the nearby mill. The Smith's were always instrumental in convincing their laborers who lived in the boarding houses to attend the nearby church. Many of the big expenses, such as remodeling the church, in 1876, and the acquisition of a plot of land for a cemetery a short distance west on Old Worcester Road, were supported

by the guidance and financial aid of the Smith family.

Membership was forty five in 1884 with 100 attending Sabbath School. Baptisms originally were by total immersion in the Ware River at Bean Island, but eventually a tank for the purpose was located in the basement area of the church.

From the 1890 period, it was doubtful that the church ever had a full-time pastor. A supply of preachers was sent from Newton Theological Institute, and for many years ministers were paid a flat rate to come to Barre to preach each Sunday. Through the years the building was maintained by the work of the Ladies Auxiliary, who became known



Coldbrook Baptist Church, moved to Greenfield, MA

for their bean suppers. On March 18, 1909 the parsonage was sold for \$1,050.00, and the money invested. In 1916 membership was thirty five, and by 1926 only three names appeared in the register: Miss Clara Adams, Mrs. Kate Sibley, and Miss Nellie Gates.

In the latter part of the nineteen-twenties, the Metropolitan District Commission began buying land in the Coldbrook area. The Baptist Church was included. Eleven people, many of them from Worcester, responded with a petition asking that the church be preserved and stated

that they would provide funds for the perpetual maintenance of the building.

The answer was negative, but the church was saved as the Christian Scientist Society of Greenfield, Massachusetts, bought the church from the MDC. They hired William Goss of Amherst to dismantle the church. It was then rebuilt in Greenfield at 463 Main Street. The only change to the structure was a taller steeple. The parsonage along with all other buildings in the Coldbrook area were razed in the 1930s.

It is an oddity that two of the three oldest Barre churches, both Baptist, still stand, but neither of them in the town.

THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

About 1820 a spot of land nearly opposite the old Boston and Albany Railroad Station in Barre Plains was purchased, and a plan was created to erect a church building for the Universalist Society. Ministers from neighboring towns had been preaching in various homes and halls. Due to the scarcity of money and the financial state of the country at that time, the church did not materialize. Again, about 1838, "a group broke off from the First Parish, filed certificates of withdrawal with the Clerk of the Parish, and a portion of them banded themselves together and formed the First Universalist Church of Barre." They held their meetings at the home of Sylvanus Twichell who was an inn holder of Barre.

In July of 1839 the Society membership voted to purchase the old Nourse Tavern site on Common Street which was then owned by the Russell heirs. After the purchase the church building committee authorized the sale of the Russell house located on the land, and it was removed to a location near the junction of James and Summer Streets. It was used as a store block for some time and later razed.

The articles of agreement were signed between "Samuel B. Dennis of Barre and Charles Bemis, Wilcut Harwood, Isaac Tucker, Paul Rice, Ethan Holden, Samuel B. Dennis, and James Holland, a committee chosen by the First Universalist Society of Barre. Specifications and bill of particulars" were formed and signed on June 1, 1839 for their new "Meeting House" to be "fully finished and completed by February 1, 1840 with the site to receive the house to be prepared by the Society at their own expense." The sum of \$4,200 was listed as the cost of the building, "to be built in accordance with the plans drawn by E. Lamb" detailing the outside finish to "well painted with three good coats of white lead paint, the blinds of Paris green, and the blinds to be hung with fastenings similar to those on the Town Hall in said Barre."

The new Universalist Church was dedicated in April 1840. According to Matthew Walker it was never a strong society and had great difficulty raising enough money to maintain preaching. Numerous



Barre Methodist Episcopal Church, Barre Golden Age Building

withdrawals from membership plus the decease of many of its most stalwart followers caused them to offer their Meeting House to their Methodist Brethren. On June 11, 1851, a motion was made to sell their Meeting House, land, bell (cast by George H. Holbrook of East Medway, Massachusetts in 1849), and choose a committee or agent to execute their vote. At a later meeting it was voted to expel former members listed as "Violators of the 4th article of the Constitution" dealing with the support of preaching. After this was done, a vote was taken in April of 1852 to "dispose of the balance of the funds among the remaining members." The vestry was the site of the meeting at which they divided equally the balance of the funds of the Universalist Society among the remnants of that society.

The Universalist Society did not exist in Barre any longer. The building that housed the Universalist Church became the home of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Barre. On September 17, 1851 the Methodists dedicated their first church building in Barre.

The structure remains on the Barre Common as the Barre Golden Age Club for senior citizens. One can enjoy the reflection of the architecture of the Barre Town Hall in the Universalist Church which shares the Greek Revival period of design.

EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

As related in our history of the First Parish Church, the Evangelical Congregational Church, as it was first known, sprang from the dissatisfaction with the First Parish pastor Rev. Thompson. Thirty-two parishioners left the First Parish after listing thirteen grievances against him (only two of which were theological in nature) and on August 15, 1827 separated themselves from the First Parish.

One of the first tasks confronting the fledgling church was the acquisition of a site for a new meeting house. The first piece of land considered was one owned by William Robinson but a deal could not be made. A vote had been taken to acquire a site and to build a house of worship in February of 1828, so the committee continued their search until they purchased land from Benjamin Clark and Anson Bates on the northeast corner of what is now Union and West Streets. They were also able to leave land in the rear for the construction of a horse shed. The agent in these acquisitions was Seth Caldwell.

A brick structure was erected on this land where the Henry Woods building now stands. It was near enough to completion to allow a meeting to be held inside on August 12, 1828. It was voted to petition the legislature "for an act of incorporation" with Seth Lee to act as petitioner. The need for enclosing and leveling the meeting house grounds was recognized and voted upon, and the establishment of a singing school approved and later retracted.

In November a vote was taken "to reserve six feet out of the shed grounds...for the purpose of building a necessary..." and Abraham Jenkins was selected to accomplish that, billing the parish when it was completed. On January 14, 1829 the building was dedicated and Mr. John Storrs was ordained.

Records indicated that the brick edifice was too hastily built. Constant problems and the rapid growth in membership led to the formation of another building committee in April 1848. Membership at the time was approximately two hundred and fifty. The committee was happy to accept the present site on Park Street as a gift from Harding P. Woods. The building was dedicated on August 22, 1849.

Naturally, a spirit of rivalry existed between members of the First Parish and the Congregational Church for many years. In July 1836 Clark S. Bixby wrote to Willard Broad in Brunswick, Maine that "our religious society is now in very good standing and our church better filled on Sabbath days than I ever knew it before" comparing the First Parish to the Congregational Church.

Insufficient support of the pastors has been given as one of the main reasons for the many changes that occurred in the early years of the new Congregational Church. There was a constant tendency to evaluate pas-

torates by the number of new admissions to the church, and so interest in revivals was constantly referred to.

For twenty-one years (from 1879-1900) J.T. Gaylord was the pastor. A graduate of Yale and the Union Theological Seminary, he and his wife owned the brick house on Mechanic Street, two lots east of the present Legion Post.



*Evangelical Congregational Church/Barre
Congregational Church United Church of
Christ, early 1900s*

The Rev. Gaylord, in his *Sketch of the History of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Barre* published in 1902, expressed the opinion that the flood of 1868 which swept away a large part of the industries on the Prince River, “destroying property of immense proportion was a disaster from which the town had never recovered.” This loss of money, the consequent departure of young people to industrial centers, the decrease in family size and the loss by death of many of the old stalwarts

of the church effected all the churches in town.

In June 1890 it was voted that “a committee be chosen to find a better way or place for meetings and social gatherings. Again, Henry Woods came to the rescue by generously donating a new organ, a new recess to receive it, new facilities for the choir and a chapel which was dedicated on December 18, 1890. The dedication speaker, Dr. George Brown, praised the interest of the Woods family.

No major problems confronted the church until New Year’s Eve 1915 when a gale blew the steeple off the church, the separation occurring just above the belfry. It landed on the front lawn. In June, 1957 the restored steeple was struck by lightning and required extensive repairs, a good part of the cost being borne by Miss Marion Whitcomb, a generous church supporter.

The present parsonage was bequeathed to the church by Miss Whitcomb in 1919. It is a rather odd fact that this house had been occupied by two pastors of the Unitarian Church, with Rev. Alvin Bailey residing there for over 50 years.

The Parish hall, called Fellowship Hall, was started by a vote on January 11, 1954 and was followed by a decade of building activity. The hall was completed in January 1955. In June of 1960 plans were made for an educational addition, and a fund raising committee was appointed in the Fall of that year. The addition was started a year later and finished in October 1962. A new chapel was dedicated on May 3, 1964. These improvements were all accomplished during the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Robert Illingworth, a former Clark University professor, whose ministry in Barre covered nineteen years (1952-1971).

During the town’s Bicentennial Celebration in 1974, the Bay State Historical League held its October meeting in the lovely, white-spired structure at the north end of the Common. A new organ was acquired in 1978, and a new floor was installed in Fellowship Hall in 1979.

LIST OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS 1829-1980

Rev. John Storrs	January 14, 1829 - April 24, 1832
Rev. Moses Grosvenor	November 13, 1832 - May 4, 1834
Rev. John Stone	October 26, 1834 - November 17, 1836
Rev. Samuel Fay	May 10, 1837 - July 1, 1840
Rev. Erasmus Moore	July 1, 1840 - October 19, 1842
Rev. Amos Bullard	October 26, 1843- August 21, 1850
Rev. C.M. Nickels	May 7, 1851 - June 17, 1856
Rev. George Denham	December 3, 1856 - May 2, 1860
Rev. David Peck	April 16, 1861 - November 19, 1867
Rev. Edwin Smith	October 29, 1868 - May 6, 1879
Rev. J.D. Potter, Asst. Pastor	
Rev. J.F. Gaylord	September 18, 1879 - July 1900

Rev. C.H. Talmage, Acting Pastor	October 1900 -1901
Rev. John Norris, Acting Pastor	April 1902 - Fall 1902
Rev. Charles Smith	Fall 1902 March 28, 1919
Rev. Lester Evans	Fall 1919 - 1921
Rev. Charles Crooks	1922 - 1937
Rev. A. Robert Harrison	December 1937 - 1942
Rev. Ernest Herrschoff	1942 - 1949
Rev. Berton D. Connerly	1949 - 1951
Rev. Ronald Tamblyn (Interim)	1951 - 1952
Mr. Craig Whitcher, Asst. Pastor	1970 - 1970
Rev. Robert Illingworth	February 1952 - October 3, 1971
Rev. Milton Bartlett (Interim)	1971 - 1972
Rev. Francis R. Kelly	1972 - December 31, 1978
Rev. Milton Bartlett (Interim)	December 1978 - June 1980
Rev. W. Gary Hayward	October 12, 1980-

METHODIST CHURCH

According to a pamphlet prepared by the United Methodist Church of Barre for the 125th Anniversary celebration of the church in May 1969, "the earliest recorded Methodist preaching in Barre was in the year 1823 by Josiah Eaton. Josiah was born in Barre in 1789 and was the son of Jonas Eaton who was himself a deacon of the First Parish Church of Barre." Josiah had left Barre at sixteen for Hudson, New York, where he was converted to Methodism. At the time of his return to Barre, he was one of three Methodists in town. The other Methodists known were "Father Plummer and his wife" who were most likely Alpheus and Lydia (Lee) Plummer.

The spiritual awakening that was the spread of Methodism had an effect first on the mill village in the south part of Barre. It was of a temporary and fluctuating nature. The awakening period lost the fervor after about ten years. Reverend Mr. Horace Moulton was a preacher who had come from Leicester to lead several revivals.

After interest waned in that part of town, "a wonderful work of grace swept Barre and people turned their thoughts heavenward" as Methodist services were held in numerous locations in the area in 1842. In the fall of the next year an old fashioned revival meeting was held in the west part of town in District #7 on the James Allen farm, which was located on the Hardwick Road in the area that is also known as the Joel Hinkley farm. In 1844, the town gave the Methodists permission for a period of one year to use the hall on the second floor of the Town House. The practice of baptism by immersion was used, and baptismal rites were conducted in the pond behind the mill near the junction of Routes 122 and 32.

The first full-time preacher, who was appointed by the 1844 New England Conference, was Reverend Mr. Philander Wallingford. He found very little to respond to his religious zeal. There was no church building, no parsonage, and only a small, enthusiastic following. Several of the manufacturers of palm leaf hats were ardent Methodists, and their new found prosperity helped to raise \$4,500 to purchase the Universalist Church building, as that society was disbanding. One Universalist who owned two pews reserved the rights on relinquishing his holding and so the "deed was made out omitting them." It was not until he finally reconsidered his decision that the Methodists secured a clear title. At this point the building was rededicated on September 17, 1851 and was free from debt.

The Methodist Church never grew rapidly. A parsonage was built on James Street and deeded to the trustees on August 21, 1852. The brethren donated labor. The basement and well at the parsonage were completed in the Spring of 1853. The Reverend Mr. H.P. Andrews and his family were the first persons to occupy it. The property remained with the church until 1895 when it was sold to George Johnson. The Johnson family retained the home until the death of Roscoe Johnson and his wife in the 1960s.

Subsequently, a house on West Street that was known as the Pratt home was used as the parsonage until 1901. That year the Mason Ainsworth brick house on South Street was acquired for \$1,750 and was used as the parsonage for many years.

With the passage of time several affluent members of the church died, and several of them were memorialized in church windows. Their financial loss was a severe blow to the continuation of the church.

In 1917 the church took on a new look as an alcove was built to accommodate a new Estey pipe organ, the choir wall was redecorated, the wood work was painted, and new flooring was laid. The Reverend Mr. Edson R. Leach was responsible for the changes. At the death of Charles Follansby, a prominent member of the church, a sum of \$10,000 was granted to the church to be used as invested funds.

A relationship existed between the church and Stetson Home for many years. The superintendent of the home was granted a pew for the use of the boys. In return for the pew much young labor was contributed to the church. The young men from Stetson were an integral part of the church filling their pew each Sunday of the year and contributing young voices to the choir.

In 1924 a committee was appointed to investigate a new heating plant. No action was taken, and five years later the overheated furnace pipe caused an estimated forty dollars worth of damage to the vestry walls. Flush toilets were installed in 1937. Water pipes were extended to the kitchen in the same year.

The famous hurricane of 1938 toppled the steeple, and the parish garage lost its roof. A fund was started to restore the steeple. A target date of 1944, the hundredth anniversary, was established to restore the steeple. Unfortunately, more pressing needs expended this money, and the steeple was never replaced.

World War II took the lives of three of the young parishioners of the church. They were Anson Robbins, Paul Cutting, and Alvin Simenson. The church was saddened by the loss. On January 12, 1947, a fire started in the basement of the church. As the town fire siren was rendered inoperable by the cold weather, the firemen had to be notified by phone. Although the fire had been discovered almost immediately, it gained much headway because of this complication. Total damage to the structure was \$7,500. It was many months before repairs were finished.

In 1958 a small room in the balcony was renovated as a Youth Chapel. Secondhand pews were installed in the chapel, that had been purchased from the Cochituate Church. A new Hammond organ was purchased, the kitchen completely remodeled, and the church shared a pastor with West Brookfield. After 1968 the title was changed to the Barre United Methodist Church. The congregation was reduced to about thirty families in 1972.

After numerous problems in 1978-79 with heating, frozen pipes, costly maintenance, and dwindling membership, the trustees voted to close the church and disperse several items. The large red plush covered altar chair and two smaller side chairs were given to the Barre Historical Society. The baptismal stand, the old wooden collection plates, the communion table, the lectern, the Bible stand, and all records that were not of interest to the Methodist Conference in Boston were also given to the Historical Society.

For a small, unannounced fee the building and property were transferred to the Barre Golden Age Club for a senior center. In the Spring of 1979 the phrase "Golden Age Meeting House" was placed across the front of the old church building. What had been a Meeting House for two different sects was now a meeting place for a nondenominational group. It has become a place of social activity for the seniors of the town.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The establishment of an Episcopal Church Mission and the erection of Christ Church on Vernon Avenue in South Barre are largely the result of the efforts of two men. The man responsible for the spiritual efforts was Archdeacon Charles Sniffen, the diocesan missionary. Sir Francis Willey, First Lord Barnby, of Bradford, Yorkshire, England, was the owner of the Barre Wool Combing Company. He was the principal

benefactor of the church as he financially supported the church, the construction, and interior furnishings.

Archdeacon Sniffen dedicated seven years to the establishment of the church. Very little is recorded of his labors. The date of the first service has been lost, but the first Communion service was held in the Social Club rooms above the personnel office of the Barre Wool Combing Co. Ltd., on Christmas morning, 1907. The building was in the process of being painted, and the worshipers knelt on the painter's tarpaulins spread over the floor. For a period of time the parishioners worshipped in the Social Club. A new meeting place was found in a small room above the fire station on Valley Road.



Laying of the corner stone of the Christ Episcopal Church, South Barre, 1909

The cornerstone of the church was laid in November 1909 by Col. William Gaston of Boston and Right Reverend Alexander H. Vinton, D.D., LL.D., first bishop of Western Massachusetts. Plans for the shingle style structure of wood and local fieldstone were prepared by L.B. Low of Boston. Construction was done by local builders and headed by Roy Fessenden. Consecration of the church took place on November 12, 1910 which was just under a year from the laying of the cornerstone.

Sir Francis Willey gave approximately \$50,000 to enable the construction of the building. He later presented the carved reredos and the baptismal font to the church. A gift from Mrs. Francis Willey with the



Christ Episcopal Church, South Barre

help of supplementary, locally-raised funds enabled the purchase of the fine pipe organ made by Hook and Hastings of Boston. Sir Francis Willey was motivated to donate these gifts in order to provide proper worship facilities for his English workers in the woolen mill.

During the first seventy five years, Christ Church has had fifteen ministers serving as Vicars. Six of them (*) divided their time with Christ Memorial Church in North Brookfield between the years of 1933 and 1959. Three of them were ordained at Christ Church (+). The vicar names and terms are as follows:

The Rev. Willis B. Hawk	Sept. 23, 1912- Sept. 24, 1915
The Rev. Charles E.O. Nichols	Jan. 1916 - Nov. 4, 1918
The Rev. George C. Graham (supply)	Dec. 1918 - July 1919
The Rev. Walter G. Harter	July 1, 1919 - Mar. 31, 1921
The Rev. Charles Mason Gross	Apr. 1921 - June 28, 1931
The Rev. Joseph Carden (supply)	Sept. 1931 - June 1933
The Rev. Ralph Burleigh Pease*	Sept. 1933 - Dec. 1938
The Rev. James DeWolf Hubbard*	May 1, 1946 - pr. 1949
The Rev. Malcolm H. Minor *+	July 1949 - Aug. 1951

The Rev. Dale L. Van Meter *+	Oct. 1951 - Dec. 31, 1955
The Rev. James L. O'Dell*	July 1, 1956 - July 15, 1959
The Rev. Robert D. Price+	June 15, 1960 - Jan. 31, 1965
The Rev. Timothy Mylott	Aug. 1965 - Sept. 1981
The Rev. Humbert Thomas	Oct. 1981 -

Christ Church received considerable support from the Barre Wool Combing Company and from the employees of the mill. The closing of the mill on July 1, 1974 was a severe blow to both South Barre and the Christ Church. Financial difficulties followed and prevented the mission from achieving parish status. The mission remains under the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. The mission still has dreams of attaining the status of a parish.

In spite of the difficulties experienced by most churches, the Christ Church has managed, through the years, to reach out to aid those less fortunate. For example, in 1929 funds were sent to aid rebuilding a Tokyo hospital following the devastating earthquake. In 1945 the membership sponsored lobster suppers which raised money to support a war orphan. In 1954 clothing was sent for the relief of Korean children. Also, in 1954 the mission adopted a parish in West Germany. In 1965 a Korean child was adopted. In 1975 a Korean foster child was accepted. In 1979 a financial contribution was sent to help the All Saints Church in Whalom, following a fire in their church. The year 1985 was designated the seventy fifth anniversary year, and it was also the year in which Christ Church established a food bank which continues to provide for the needy of Barre and surrounding communities.

The Christ Church of Barre bears the name of a mission well, for the hearts of the parish are reflected in the good works that they have shared with the community and the world.

BARRE PLAINS UNION CHAPEL

The Barre Plains Union Chapel Association was founded on October 17, 1898. At that time the members met at Paquin's Hall in the Plains. The purpose of the association as stated in the Constitution was "to aid the Sunday school and such other religious work may be considered for the best interest of the community." The Constitution and by-laws were established, and the Chapel Association is referred to as a club. There was no building for the association to meet, thus the members decided to rectify the situation. Funds for raising a chapel was undertaken. When the sum of \$30.00 was raised, plans and estimates were "placed to bid" by two Barre residents, a Mr. Bassett and Mr. Osgood. Three others persons from out of town were participants in the bids and estimates.



Union Chapel, Red Mens Hall, Barre Plains

The Association voted to proceed with the building of a chapel on land that was donated by Mr. Austin Adams, which was located on the south side of Furnace Road. The Ladies Aid Society raised most of the funds for the chapel. In 1900 meetings were held in the chapel although it was still in an unfinished state. Financial problems beset the Association, and member after member resigned from the soliciting committee. The committee's charge was to raise the funds for visiting preachers.

All faiths were welcomed at the chapel. Preachers from Barre and nearby towns addressed the assembly. Sunday school was to "be held for all."

During the influenza epidemic of 1918, the meetings were canceled. After the epidemic had passed, the Association seemed to have a great deal of difficulty in assembling the members to make plans for the future of the Union Chapel. On March 20, 1930, the remaining members of the Association took action to sell the building. On April 21, 1930, fourteen members met to vote the final decisions regarding the sale of the building to the Wanapan Tribe, No. 141, Improved Order of the Red Men for the sum of \$2000.00. Mr. Austin Adams was the Association President at that time. The final meeting of the Association was on October 6, 1930. At the meeting it was voted to "divide equally among the four remaining Protestant churches of Barre, viz., the Congregationalist, Methodist, Episcopal, and Unitarian and after all expenses are paid...to dissolve the corporation according to law." The sum of \$200.00 in

check was distributed to each of the mentioned churches.

The Barre Union Chapel has a place in the history of Barre and Barre Plains for the finances were carefully dispersed to other churches, and the members blended into the other churches in town.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

In 1837 or 1838 the first Roman Catholic services were held in Barre, as a mission station. Reverend Fitton said mass in the home of Mrs. Mary Garland on Hubbardston Road. Her house is the second on the south side of Hubbardston Road, east of the junction of Valley Road. For years masses were said in private homes. Notice of services and the anticipated arrival of the priest being spread by word of mouth. The priest would be in Barre about twice a year.

Rev. Matthew Gibson, one of the early priests assigned to Worcester and Hampshire Counties, traveled to Barre on horseback. During this time levees were held to raise money for a church.

In 1846 the new Town Hall was used for formal worship services. Around 1853 a brick building, on the southeast side of the common, became available to rent. Erected prior to 1833, it had been occupied by Alvah Hathaway as a store. Many small operations were also housed there, including a harness and trunk business. For some years a good part of the block had been used as tenements. Services were held here for approximately two years before purchase. On October 27, 1855, according to the *Barre Gazette*, "Peter Tanzy acquired a deed from Sophia Adams for her brick tenement facing Barre Common, the Deed having been taken to Worcester by a stage driver to have it recorded." Subscriptions in money and labor were given by the parishioners and the property was acquired in the name of Bishop Beavan of the Springfield Diocese, to which Barre belonged at that time. Rev. James Quan was in charge of remodeling the building, a process that would take three years.

The *Barre Gazette* of June 12, 1857 stated that "preparations are being made to complete the Catholic Church in this village, which has remained in an unfinished state for a long time. We hope these unsightly piles of rubbish lying about the premises will soon be removed." Obviously things did not move smoothly nor swiftly for the parishioners in remodeling their new building into a church.

In October of 1857 a short statement in the *Gazette* announced that "services will be held at the Catholic Church in this village next Sunday." Descriptions were published weekly concerning the appearance of the site, remarking on its "coat of brown paint with dark trimmings: and the construction of a "concrete walk which would be a great convenience especially in mud time." In 1858 Rev. Quan dedicated the church, calling it St. Joseph's.

Barre was then a mission of Worcester; in 1862 the mission transferred to the Otter River a town twenty miles north, then to Ware, then to North Brookfield and in 1871 back to Otter River. The pastor made his monthly visits driving a single horse or team, from Otter River on Saturday, staying over and caring for the needs of his congregation, saying mass Sunday morning and returning to Otter River via the Old Templeton Road (from Barre Center, up Christian Hill by #9 district to White Hill and on to Otter River thru Templeton). This trip was made in all seasons of the year.

Until May 4, 1859, when the first parcel of land was purchased from John and Mary Murray for St. Joseph's Cemetery, burial was often in a family or neighborhood burial ground. The Harty Cemetery on Phillipston Road (also known as White Hill Road) just over the Hubbardston line, is one example.

On May 6, 1896 a spectacular fire destroyed the old Naquag Hotel block adjoining St. Joseph's Church. The efforts of the firemen could not keep the fire from spreading to the church and it was so severely damaged it could not be repaired. Masses were again said in the Town Hall and plans proceeded to raise such funds as would be required to rebuild. A new Gothic-styled St. Joseph's was erected on the same site and dedicated on October 25, 1896 by the Rt. Rev. Thomas D. Beavan, bishop of the Springfield Diocese. The *Barre Gazette* story of the dedication listed J. Ryan of Gardner as the contractor in charge of erecting the new church.

In 1903 Barre became a separate parish and the Rev. Michael W. Mulhane was appointed first resident pastor of the new parish which at that time included Petersham and South Barre. Petersham was later annexed to Athol and South Barre assigned to Gilbertville and Barre in return received the mission of Wheelwright. Father Mulhane was a popular cleric well-loved by all denominations and at the time of the dedication of the Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand on the common he gave the dedicatory address.

A permanent priest's residence was acquired in 1919, when Father Mulhane moved into a house on the west side of South Street, at the Southern tip of the common. The "*Barre Gazette*" of June 13 reported that he moved "his household goods into the Dr. F.W. Carroll place this week."

In 1936 the newly ordained Father Walter Mara came to the Barre church. Then in August of 1938 Rev. Bernard Kerrigan assumed the office of pastor. In 1944 Rev. Daniel Daley was assigned to Barre for five years.

The Order of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers established a Novitiate in 1946 on the former Gaston estate on Pleasant Street. The Fathers became active participants in the parish until the order closed its house



St. Joseph's Church, Barre 1896

in 1976. It is now owned by the Insight Meditation Society.

Father Daley was replaced by Rev. Arthur Faron who stayed only two years, to be replaced by Rev. Francis Kelly, who remained for fourteen years until 1965. Rev. Edward Dyer was Barre's next pastor until 1970 when Rev. John McKenna arrived, followed briefly by Rev. William McGovern, then by Rev. Leo O'Neil. In 1979 Monsignor Thomas Daley served as "interim pastor," with assistance from Father. Edward Condors, till 1982 when Father Eugene Berthiaume arrived from Princeton.

1903-1938	Reverend Michael W. Mulhane
1938-1944	Reverend Bernard Kerregan
1944-1949	Reverend Daniel Daley
1949-1951	Reverend Arthur Faron
1951-1965	Reverend Francis Kelly
1965-1970	Reverend Edward Dyer
1970-1974	Reverend John Mc Kenna
1974-1976	Reverend William Mc Govern
1976-1980	Reverend Leo J. O'Neil
1980-1982	Monsignor Thomas Daley
1982-1988	Reverend Eugene Berthiaume
1988-1992	Reverend Ronald Provost
1992-	Reverend Thomas Hultquist



St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church, South Barre

ST. THOMAS a BECKET CATHOLIC CHURCH

A need for a church in South Barre was recognized by the owners of the Barre Wool Combing Company soon after the beginning of the twentieth century. Masses were said in several homes at various times, with the very first being said on Christmas Day, 1908 by the Rev. Father Mulhane in the Swimming Club Hall which was located in the mill yard. Masses were also said in the Italian section in Columbia Hall and later in the newly constructed Florence Hall.

In 1900 Francis Willey, Esq. of Bradford, England purchased the mill site along the Ware River and planned to establish a woolen mill. The new mill owner eventually brought English workers and their families to staff the mills. Many of these families were Catholics who would devote their energies, in future years, to building a church of their own.

Word spread rapidly that work was available at the new mill. Immigrants, from Italy, Poland, and Lithuania, came with the hope of finding work and a better life. They brought few material possessions, but they carried their strong Catholic roots.

In the early years of the mission Rev. Hickey or a curate would travel to South Barre by horse and buggy or by train to celebrate mass. Some of the English women would arrive before the priest to prepare the hall and bring in the altar vestments.

It is said that a strike erupted at the mill and the Rev. Hickey was instrumental in helping to negotiate a settlement. The owners of the mill showed their appreciation for his efforts by deeding land on Vernon Avenue to the Diocese of Springfield on which the Catholic community could build their church.

Parishioners banded together to raise fund for construction of the church. They ran card parties, lawn parties, plays, socials, and minstrel shows. Some of these events were held in private homes along Vernon Avenue or in the function halls owned by the mill. Volunteers walked door to door throughout the area to canvass for donations.

Father Doherty traveled regularly to South Barre, usually in a horse drawn buggy, or in the winter in an open sleigh. It was necessary in winter to carry a snow shovel, as the priest was often the first one to travel the road. Because he had learned enough of the vernacular of the ethnic groups, he was usually the priest that was called to perform baptisms, marriages, and sick calls. He was responsible for the teaching of catechism to the young Italian children in classes that were held in the public school at the end of the regular school day.

Father Hickey was transferred to Clinton before the construction of the church. Rev. John P. Kirby was appointed pastor of St. Aloysius and the South Barre mission on February 1, 1917. Soon after Father Kirby arrived, a notable improvement occurred. Mass was changed from the Swimming Club to Columbia Hall, which was owned by the Barre Wool and located on Valley road.

Ground was broken for the new church on June 5, 1917 and was under the direction of Father Kirby and Father Doherty. Several parishioners participated in the event. Farmers, especially from the Oakham border, shared their knowledge and skills of clearing and grading the land and lent their animals and equipment for the task.

The Barre Wool offered their outside crew, which was comprised mostly of Italian laborers. They mixed the cement and poured the foundation. These tasks were accomplished on the company time.

Construction of the new building progressed rapidly. The first Sunday mass was celebrated in the uncompleted church on January 13, 1918. By late spring, the church was completed and was officially dedicated by Bishop Beaven on June 16, 1918. St. Thomas was the name chosen for the church in honor of the twelfth century English martyr and also of Bishop Thomas Beaven. It was the only church dedicated in the diocese during his jubilee year. The church was built at the cost of about \$15,000.00 and was debt free in two years!

St. Thomas remained a mission of St. Aloysius until September 1922, when Rev. Casey was named the first permanent pastor. Shortly after Father Casey arrived, construction began on the rectory that was to stand beside the church. Parishioners again worked together to raise funds for the benefit of St. Thomas. Spiritual life flourished as parishioners were now able to worship with full benefit of the church and clergy. They showed their appreciation by faithfully supporting the church and the activities of the church.

The church saw many improvements. While Rev. Dillon was pastor,

the church and rectory were renovated, and the first organ was replaced by a new electric organ and chimes. Under the guidance of Father Reardon, plans were drafted to construct a complete cellar under the church which would be used as a parish hall. The hall would provide a place for the teaching of religious education to the youth of the parish and for the holding of parish social activities. Men volunteered their time for regularly scheduled work crews. The task of digging was accomplished by hand, and the hauling of the soil was accomplished in wheelbarrows. The work began on June, 1948. Work progressed rapidly, and the hall was completed in six months. It was officially opened with a three day bazaar on November 18, 1948.

On March 7, 1950 the Diocese of Worcester was established and the Rt. Rev. John Wright was installed as the first Bishop of Worcester. St. Thomas Church was now a part of the Worcester Diocese. On March 11, 1951, the new bishop made his first trip to the parish.

In 1955 Bishop Wright ruled that all parishes in the diocese would be called by their proper titles, and the church in South Barre has since been known as St. Thomas a Becket.

During the early 1960s, in accordance with the decrees of the Vatican II Council, the interior of the church was remodeled to accommodate the changes in liturgy to the English Mass.

The Golden Jubilee of the Church was celebrated on July 9, 1967 with a Pontifical Concelebrated High Mass. The Rt. Rev Bernard J. Flanagan, Bishop of Worcester, was the principal celebrant. A banquet followed the mass and was held at the Ruggles Lane School auditorium.

A list of the Reverends that have served the parish is as follows:

Reverend John Casey	1922-1925
Reverend William O'Malley	1925-1937
Reverend Francis Kelly	1937-1941
Reverend Jeremiah Reardon	1941-1953
Reverend J. Marcus Murtough	1953-1967
Reverend Alphonse Volungis	1967-1969
Reverend John Cahill	1969-1971
Reverend J. Marcus Murtough	1971-1984
Reverend Anthony DiPucchio	1984-1991
Reverend Mark Szymcik	1991-

The parish has been active in the Ecumenical Community and a supporter of the Bishop Fund which provides moneys for a large variety of charities. St. Thomas a Becket continues to provide for the spiritual need of the parish community in South Barre and is an integral part of the entire Barre community.

NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CENTER

The New Life Christian Center held the first official Sunday morning worship service in Florence Hall in South Barre on August 17, 1979. There were three people in attendance at this service besides the minister and his wife.

Prior to this time, the church had existed as a Bible study group of five women who had met in the home of Dorothy Whipplee on Town Farm Road. The study group moved to an upstairs room of the Barre Congregational Church where Marge Brauchle of Athol led the Bible group. It was at this time that the Reverend Michael Petrucci, who had been an assistant pastor in Fitchburg, agreed that he would attempt to establish an Assemblies of God Church in the Barre area. Pastor Petrucci moved to Barre in June and led the Bible study in the Congregational Church until Florence Hall could be rented.

The first meeting place was in very poor condition, and often during the winter months the congregation had to meet in an unheated room. When Reverend Timothy Mylott, vicar of Christ Church and his congregation made the facilities of that building available to the fledgling church, new strengths and hope brought steady growth. From May 1980 until August 1984 services were held around those of the Episcopal Church. In the summer months New Life Christian Center held their services at 8:00 a.m., and the winter services were held at 12:00 noon with Sunday School following.

During the period of the members meeting in the Episcopal Church in South Barre, the congregation of New Life Christian Center grew to an average of about thirty members. In June of 1984 the congregation was faced with the decision of finding a new meeting place.

On the first Sunday in September 1984, services were moved to the Barre Town Hall. Within one year, the congregation grew to an average attendance of forty.

In 1989 the New Life Center purchased the former Kaplan Department Store in South Barre, and over the past years have been in the process of refurbishing the building as their church. Recently, the steeple was placed on the building. Each step brings the church closer to a finished facility. The New Life Christian Center is an Assemblies of God Church. It is recognized as being the fastest growing denomination in America, with sixty-five new churches in Southern New England within the past seven years. The present membership of the South Barre church numbers about 100 persons.

The church is helping to support missions in Japan, Swaziland, West Germany, Belgium, El Salvador, Austria, and the Polish Ministry of the U.S.. The church is also active in home missions as they support two drug rehabilitation programs which are located in Brockton and Boston,

Massachusetts that are known as Teen Challenge and Out Reach Ministry. Young unwed mothers are touched by the New Life Church as the parish supports a home in Oxford, Massachusetts that is known as Star Home. Their latest mission is an interest in a new church located in the south end of Boston.

Since the first official worship in 1979, three pastors have served the membership and are as follows:

Pastor Michael Petrucci
 Pastor Richard Medeiros
 Pastor F. Calvin Miller

June 1979 - 1986
 1986 - Aug. 1989
 Feb. 1990 -

The New Life Church is the newest church in the town. It is quietly taking its place within the community with an outreach beyond the community. The strength in the church is growing from the support of the membership and their desire to share in the Lord's work.



Barre Common

SCHOOLS



EARLY SCHOOLS

Laws that governed the settlement of “districts” that were to become towns, included some regulations regarding the schooling of children. It was required that a settlement of fifty families or householders provide a school with a “schoolmaster to teach the children to read and write.” A fine of fifty pounds could be levied on a district for not abiding with this law.

Accordingly, provisions for schooling were made for the Northwest district as early as 1733. The proprietors set aside “Lot S of nearly fifty acres for a schoolhouse near the planned center of the settlement and convenient to the meeting house.”

Since the town records prior to 1763 were destroyed by a fire in the home of John Caldwell, who had been the town clerk, a gap in the school records occurred for the years 1749 to 1768.

In records that are still extant, we find that a town meeting of the Northwest district in 1763 voted that “twenty-six pounds, thirteen shillings, four pence be assessed upon the district and that school be kept at the same place and in the same manner as last year.” The settlers voted in the following year to have school kept at eight places in the district and listed them as “at or near John Pfessenden’s House, Josiah Holden’s, Jonathan Metcalf’s, School House One, Robert Smith’s, Robert Cunningham’s, Wm. Forbes’s, and Capt. Lee’s.” Whenever money was appropriated for the support of religion, the people voted money for the schools.

The earliest schools were kept in the farm kitchens by traveling school masters. The masters would “board around” with various families in the neighborhood of the school. They would board a few weeks at a time with each family. A school master, prior to 1775 listed in the Town Records, was Mr. Parker who boarded at the homes of William Buckminster, John White, Jonas How, Aaron Hutchinson, Amasa Carpenter, Joseph Morse, Stephen Lane, William Caldwell, and David Caldwell.

In 1783 the town, which was incorporated under the name of Barre,

voted to "sell the school house that stands on the common near the Meeting House and that the center quarter have the liberty to set up a new school house on the same grounds." Matthew Walker wrote that this old school stood where the Town House is now located.

The following year, in 1784, the report of Committee Nine was accepted, and it was voted to erect eight school buildings. Seven of the schools were to be twenty-five feet square. The school in the center of the town was to be twenty-five feet by thirty feet. These buildings were to be built at:

"the Center; Hawes Quarter, to and near the great rock and south of the old school house; Lt. Smith's Quarter where the present school is now; Esq. Caldwell's, where the old school is now; Mr. Harding's Quarter, near his house; Maj. Nye's Quarter, to stand on the knoll on the north side of the river near the bridge at Col. Winslow's; Capt. Lee's Quarter, on the road near Ezekiel Lee's House; Capt. Allen's Quarter, on the road from the Meeting House to William Carruth's near where Samuel Smith carts his hay across Capt. Allen's land."

Economic and political considerations delayed the expenditure of the money for these new buildings, and the construction did not take place for some time. During the 1780s the town was split into factions by Shays' Rebellion and attention was focused on the problems of the new nation. By 1790 the town voted to divide the town into districts or squadrons with a schoolhouse located in each squadron. It was also voted to "obtain leases of those spots of land whereon to set them and determine what buildings now standing are convenient for said districts." The districts were assigned a number and described as follows:

"#1 District where the school now stands." (Center District on Common)

"#2 District where the old one is." (East corner of junction of Old Coldbrook and Fruitland Roads)

"#3 District Center between Gershom Denton's and Jeduthan Green's, on the road from Hubbardston to Barre by John Metcalf's." (Beyond the Covered Bridge east of the Ware River)

"#4 District, Twelve rods south of David Underwood's dwelling house." (North of present No. 4 Schoolhouse, Inc.)

"#5 District on land of Elijah Mann's by the county road a few rods north of Landlord Smith's watering place." (Off Pleasant Street near junction of Hawes Hill Road)

"#6 District on the road by John Allen's to Wm. Carruth's, where Samuel Smith's Road come onto said Allen's Road, where school now sits." (Corner of Route 122 and Washburn Road)



Old Brick School House, District No. 6, corner of Washburn Road and Rt. 122, Barre

"#7 District on road leading from Hardwick by Col. Zenas Winslow's toward bridge over the river on the flat near small stone bridge on the right hand side of said road leading from Winslow's." (West Barre) Not all of the locations were acceptable to the district members, and this district was disputed for several years.

It was voted to assess the inhabitants four hundred pounds to build these schools. The assessors were instructed to give credit to donors for building materials furnished for these schools.

The population of Barre continued to rise during this era. By 1796 there were nearly two thousand people in town. More schools were needed to accommodate the larger number of children. Thus more schools were considered and added to the original seven districts.

#8 District was added. It was decided to build it on the

east side of the Ware River thirty rods from the bridge. Since it was also decided to make the center school even larger, the former vote was reconsidered.

#9 District was added. A school was built near the junction of the Old Petersham-Hubbardston Turnpike and the Old Phillipston Road where it remained for over a century. Several Phillipston and Williamsville children attended #9 district school.

Shortly after 1800 it became necessary to divide the western squadron.

#10 District was established in the Dana Road area. Thirty dollars was appropriated for the construction of the building.

#11 District was added to fill the need of families in the Harwood Crossing area. The schoolhouse was located west of the Burnshirt River near the junction of the Burnshirt Valley Road and the Hubbardston Turnpike. The subsequent construction of a railroad passing next to this schoolhouse made it possible for one teacher at #11 to ride from her home in Coldbrook to the doorstep of the school each day.



Barre Plains School, now the fire Department

#12 District was added on the New Braintree Road just north of Pratt's Brook. As industries grew, the population increased in the mill villages along the river valleys. This thriving little community grew even larger and busier with the construction of two railroads through its environs. The rails of this noisy "iron monster" passed through the location of the Barre Plains school and caused the removal of that building to another lot nearby, where it became a two-story residence. A newer, two-story structure was built to house the school north of the road to Hardwick. This building became the Barre Plains Fire Station in 1936.

#13 District was on the south side of the Ware River and was the product of another mill village requiring a school which was known as Smithville, (White Valley). The school was built on a road that was later discontinued. The location was then changed to a more convenient spot on the flats near the center of the village. That school was replaced much later by a larger stucco structure which was eventually moved to the other side of the road where it still exists, considerably remodeled into a two-family dwelling.

As the nineteenth century passed, more districts were added.

#14 District school was in the southwestern part of the town near the Hardwick line on Jewett Road.

#15 District school was in the Wauwinet Road area.

#16 District school was in the mill village of Dennyville, (Crossleyville), and since 1900 it was known as South Barre. The first school in this area was held in part of a wooden dwelling that was moved to the rear of the brick houses in the area (now Trafalgar Square) and used as a schoolhouse for some time. This was later abandoned, and South Barre had no school until the early 1900s when the Barre Wool Company erected a school building north of the river and on the road to Barre Center. This school preceded the construction of the High Plains School which was later renamed the Roger Langley School.

#17 District school was added in the eastern part of town as the result of a petition signed by eleven residents in 1841. Students of this area had been attending #3 school,

and the petitioners felt that "they labour under many disadvantages in consequence of belonging to said district, wherefore, they pray that they may be set off from #3 district and erected into a separate district enjoying all the privileges and subject to all the liabilities of other school districts." Signers of the petition were Oliver Lowell, Otis Ware, Silas H. Britt, Charles S. Britt, David Parker, John Walker, Jr., David Barnes, Ansil S. Thompson, Oliver Wellington, James H. Desper, and Leonard Stark.

Registers of thirteen school districts in Barre covering the period from 1838 through 1844 show that the school year was divided into two terms. The winter term ran from early November until the last of February or often mid-March. The summer term ran from early May through August and often into September. In many districts, where schools were under the direction of the district committee as well as the town school committee, contributions from district families in the form of tuition and support could extend the school terms for four to six weeks. These sessions were then referred to as "private schools." Although "private" in name, the children received their education in the district schoolhouses. The heavier enrollment period in the district schools was during the winter term when a larger number of male students attended. Quite often some of the pupils were over twenty years of age, and the teacher would offer more advanced courses in language and mathematics. The winter term was generally administered by a male teacher whose wages ranged from twelve to thirty-five dollars per month. As the teachers "boarded round" as mentioned before, they not only knew the pupils scholastically but often socially as well.

The summer term was conducted by a female teacher whose wage was much lower than that of her male counterpart. Her wages averaged from four to six dollars monthly, and board was often given to her by district families. The summer school had younger pupils enrolled, sometimes having a few children as young as two years old who were taught the "A,B,C's." Very rarely were any of the scholars in the summer school over sixteen years old.

In Barre, the only district that separated the school into age groups was the Center, District #1, School. At the Center District there was the Infant School, the Middle School, and the High School. The Infant School was comprised of pupils from two years through nine years of age. As many as sixty students were enrolled, and a female teacher was in charge. She earned an average of four to six dollars a month. The Middle School listed students who ranged in age from six through twelve. A larger enrollment, often more than sixty, was taught by one teacher whose wages ranged from seven to fourteen dollars per month.

The High School was usually instructed by a male teacher, whose compensation was proportionately higher.

Another district which had a large number of pupils was #12 in Barre Plains, which for many years included the village of South Barre. Fifty to eighty scholars studied under the tutelage of teachers Caroline Bacon, J. Henry Hill, W. Austin Williams, Julia Bigelow, Harriet Walker, David Hamilton, Mary Conant, Benjamin Spooner, Alice March, and Addison Holland.

It is recorded that a branch school was conducted in the winter of 1840-41 at the "woolen factory village," (South Barre). It was held for eight weeks and was well received. After that term ended, public contributions from within the district allowed a "private school" to be held for four more weeks. The teacher received the tuition collected.

The close involvement of district families in the operations of the schools was not without disadvantages. In 1838 the teacher at the District #5 school became ill and was unable to conduct her classes. An irate parent, who complained that his four year old had been out of the schoolroom too long and gotten his "clothes dirtied," hastened the decision to dismiss the teacher by nailing the schoolhouse door shut so that the recuperated teacher could not return to her duties.

George Harwood recalled his days in the #3 school, before the Civil War, where twenty to thirty youngsters attended school. The winter term was taught by Sardius Sibley, and the boys attended the session when work was slack on the farms. He recalled that summer school was apt to be taught by a woman, and the smaller children attended. He described a school of 1820 as an unpainted wooden structure about twenty-five feet square with a hip roof and heated by a fireplace. The building was usually at or near a junction of two roads, preferably near the center of population of that district. An older boy who lived near the school or the teacher served as janitor, fireman, and handyman.

The early neighborhood schools were simple in structure and equipment. The instruction was only as good as the instructor. However, in spite of the many difficulties, a number of students who were inspired by teachers continued their education to institutions of higher learning.

The district schools were also community centers as shown in an article in the October 28, 1879 issue of the *Barre Gazette*.

"The new school (#7) near John Allen's saw mill was subjected to a warming last Tuesday night. The people of that neighborhood with invited guests assembled and spent the evening in a social manner. A bountiful collation was served and the affair was concluded with a dance which continued till the small hours of the morning. It was said that the school house and lot, when it was completed will have cost nearly two thousand dollars."

Joel Hinkley also recorded this information in his diary stating that, "the dedication was held on October 25, 1870." The old #7 building was sold but continued in public affairs, as it was the site of Sunday School meetings and the organizations of the S.W. Cheese Factory.

At the dedication of the new #5 schoolhouse on November 16, 1871, "recently constructed by a Barre carpenter, Charles Osgood," Mr. W.H. Bowker of Phillipston, a former teacher, gave the dedication address. In it he referred to events that had been told and retold by parents and grandparents of the students in the autumn of 1792:

"The old school had as its teacher, Col. Samuel Henry, who received for his services, seven pounds, thirteen shilling. Children who attended the school ranged in age from five to twenty years. Its first female teacher was Nabby Bent who taught in the summer of 1794 and was paid the sum of two pounds. She boarded with William Clark, who received one hundred sixteen shillings for her board."

Two or more locations are recorded for many of the district schools in town. Often a new building was constructed, but usually a vote to change the location of a school simply resulted in the men of the district removing the 25 x 25 foot building from its rock piers, placing it onto rollers, and dragging it to a new location. Because the schools were designed to be moved whenever shifts in population or the loss of a lease necessitated it, they were rarely placed on a permanent foundation. For this reason, no physical evidence of their former presence exists today. Any attempt to locate the precise setting of a district school which is no longer standing becomes a matter of guesswork.

NORMAL SCHOOL

During construction of the Town House, Barre and seven other towns in the state submitted a bid for the new experimental State Normal School. The town offered suitable quarters in the newly constructed Town House for a three year trial period under the direction of the State Board of Education.

In December 1838 the executive committee of the State Board of Education accepted the offer from the town of Barre for a Normal School. The Normal School was the brainchild of the educator Horace Mann, Secretary of the State Board of Education.

On September 5, 1839, twelve girls and eight boys convened with the Reverend Samuel P. Newman, instructor and principal, and opened in Barre the first co-educational teachers college in the state. Newman was a well known educator and had authored several articles in the edu-

cational field. He was an Orthodox Congregational minister and had come to Barre from Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine.

To attend the Normal School male applicants had to reach the age of seventeen. Female applicants had to be sixteen years of age. Both of the groups had to be in good health and of high moral standards. They had to declare their intention to teach in the state after finishing their course at the Normal School. They were required to pass examinations in orthography (spelling), reading, writing, English grammar, geography, and arithmetic. Originally no pupil was to be admitted for a term of less than one year, but criticism from the local populace later changed this to completion of one term, which usually lasted fifteen weeks. Tuition was free. The students were to provide their own board and room, class books, and incidental expenses of the school.

The *Barre Gazette* reported preparations for the school and the general progress of the new experimental venture. Fifty pupils were expected to enroll the first term. An ad in June 1839 offered room and board for students at \$1.75 weekly for males, and \$1.50 for females exclusive of washing. These ads were signed by Willard Broad, Treasurer of the Barre Normal School Association.

The dedication address was delivered on September 5, 1839 at the First Parish Church by the Honorable Edward Everett, Governor of Massachusetts and chairman of the State Board of Education. The *Barre Gazette* lamented the fact that many from the local community were not able to hear the "eloquent and thoughtful passages" of the orator of the day. He spoke to a crowded house but without pomp and ceremony which was due to the wishes of the Board of Visitors who superintended the school. The *Gazette* felt that was in good taste due to the very experimental nature of the Normal School. It was noted that favorable criticism was needed. The public also needed to be educated to the new trial educational venture.

Students were admitted to a single term. Lectures on management and instruction of the common schools would be heard. The class grew to thirty nine students before the end of the first term. Only twelve high schools were listed in the state at the time, so critics considered it more of a high school to which students could attend with only an eighth grade training.

Due to the low stipends received by teachers in the small towns, criticisms were aired as to the length of time a student was expected to attend. During the existence of the school in Barre, other criticisms were aired about the young male students being too obstreperous and about the unpopularity of the Normal School in the town.

In February 1840 Horace Mann, of the State Board of Education, arrived late on a stormy evening. His audience, who understood the perilous traveling conditions, waited patiently for the speaker. He finally

arrived at "a late hour." He addressed an attentive audience and pointed to the advantages of the Normal School project. Two columns in the *Barre Gazette* were given to his address. In March 1840, a bill was submitted to the State Legislature to abolish the Normal School system. It was reported that the teaching was impractical and suggested the abolition of the State Board of Education. Governor Morton opposed the trial school. In March the Legislature, after hearing both sides of the question, decided to give the Normal School an additional year or more to prove itself. The powers of the Board of Education were transferred to the Governor and his Council.

After the untimely death of the teacher and principal of the Barre Normal School in February 1842, the school was allowed to lapse. Horace Mann had searched for a more suitable location for a Normal School in or near a well populated area and with a good rail service.

A few of the objections to the Normal School were criticisms of: raising prices of teachers, abandoning smaller communities in favor of larger and more affluent cities and towns, finding better accommodations for students, needing a more central location, and promoting of party politics and religion. These issues had to be faced and decision had to be made.

The *Barre Gazette*, in the issue of February 25, 1842, reported that the spring term of the Normal School was to have commenced on the 16th of February. A large number of students reported for admission to the school, but no official personnel were on hand to greet them. Several pupils had traveled "a great distance," and there was great disappointment on the part of the potential students. The *Gazette* reported that it felt that "an authorized agent of the State Board of Education should have either provided a teacher or given notice to somebody in town that the inquiries of those interested might be answered."

In March 1842, a letter appeared in the local paper from Horace Mann absolving himself and members of the State Board of Education for failing to open the school at the proposed time. All advertising had been done by the principal, and so after the death of Professor Newman, there were no further notices.

Found under the altar stone of the First Parish Church in Barre at the time of the razing was a catalogue of Westfield State Normal School for the term ending November 22, 1848. It listed the dates of September 4, 1839 to November 1841 as the dates of existence of the Barre Normal School. It was reported that during the stay in Barre, 165 students were in attendance.

In September 1844, the Normal School was established at Westfield, Massachusetts. A plaque was placed on Town House of Barre many years later which reads:

"Site of the Barre State Normal School

Sept. 4, 1839 - Nov. 1841

Re-established at Westfield, Sept. 4, 1844

Presented by Westfield State Teacher's College Alumni Assoc.

Sept. 9, 1939"

DR. BROWN'S INSTITUTION

According to the 1898 catalog of Elm Hill School, that institution "licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in June, 1848, as a school for the education and improvement of backward children ...became the first institution of its kind in America."

Founded by Dr. Hervy Bachus Wilbur, the experimental school began with just one pupil in the doctor's own home. Dr. Wilbur was born in Wendell, Massachusetts, the son of a clergyman. He attended Dartmouth College and Amherst College and studied medicine at the Berkshire Medical Institution in Pittsfield, from which he graduated in 1843. He began his practice in Lowell, later moved to Dana and then Barre, where in 1847 he married Harriet Holden, daughter of Josiah D. and Martha Wadsworth Holden. They lived on West Street where Dr. Wilbur started his school.

By working with his charge as physician, teacher, and physical trainer, he met with remarkable success and gained new students. His home became inadequate for the experimental school. He moved to larger quarters in the old Bates house at the corner of High and Pleasant Streets.



*Institution for Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Youth,
Barre, Mass.*



Dr. Brown's Institution, Broad St., Barre



Dr. Brown's Institution, from the belfry of the Unitarian Church, 1874

The story of his successes received great publicity and caught the attention of a member of the New York State legislature, who encouraged that body to establish a similar school in Albany. When the idea was adopted, Dr. Wilbur was invited to be the superintendent. Consequently in 1851, he left Barre and attained continued success in the

field. He became a popular speaker on the subject of retardation. As one of the founders of Syracuse University, he lectured at the University on the subject of mental illness.

When Wilbur left Barre he transferred his school to a young colleague, Dr. George Brown. Dr. Brown and his wife, Catharine Wood Brown, operated the school in the quarters on Pleasant Street. Dr. George Brown was born in Wilton, New Hampshire on October 11, 1823. He was the son of Ephraim and Sarah King Brown. He attended Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts and Burlington College, at Burlington, Vermont. Subsequently he studied medicine with Dr. Norman Smith in Groton. In 1850 he entered private practice in Barre. A year later he was directing the Elm Hill School. His ability to continue Dr. Wilbur's methods allowed the school to thrive, and expand. Dr. Brown purchased the Willard Broad Estate on the east side of Broad Street.



Dr. Brown's Institution, Broad St., Barre

It was at this location that Elm Hill School became nationally known as an institution for the "care of feeble-minded youths." Additions were made to the buildings. Over the years buildings were acquired on Union and High Streets. The Sanderson farm, now in the area of Ruggles Lane School and Grandview Terrace was purchased. In all, two hundred and fifty acres surrounding the school became known as "Dr. Brown's Institution."

Dr. Brown became an integral part of the community. He served in many capacities. A former patient years later wrote that, "Dr. Brown was well liked in the Town of Barre and took as much interest in town affairs as he did in his farm and home for feeble-minded. He was a man of great executive ability and ran the farm in grand style, always having some improvement made on the property."

The school reached its peak about 1890 when over one hundred stu-

dents were in residence. Upon the death of Dr. Brown in 1892, Dr. George A. Brown, who had been associated with his father since his graduation from Yale Medical School, assumed the management of the school. He, in turn, was followed by his son Dr. G. Percy Brown.

About 1888 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts began to build additions to existing state schools which made their institutions available for the education of retarded children. This, coupled with legislation regulating private schools of this type, added extra burdens to Dr. Brown's Institute which caused the decline of his private school. As a result, the Elm Hill School found it difficult to compete with the publicly subsidized institutions and finally closed in August 1946, just four years after the death of Dr. George A. Brown.

The 250 acres were sold in parcels, and the buildings were razed. A historic educational experiment had come to an end. One would not know that the institute existed in Barre for no marker denotes its location. Historically the institute prevails in the minds of the community as many pictorial artifacts remain to remind the citizens of the existence of this first innovative institution.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The earliest reference to a need for a secondary school in Barre was at a 1798 Town Meeting when the idea of an academy was presented to the voters. Although no further mention was made of it for some time, the suggestion did show the concern of several individuals in their desire for better educational opportunities in the town.

"In 1825 the town voted to raise the sum of \$1,800 on condition that: the inhabitants by subscription procure a good spot of land on which to build an academy and erect the same...and said building is fitted and ready to receive scholars there shall be \$200 assessed each and every year for the term of nine years, which sum shall be turned over to the trustees of said Academy. Each family in said town shall have the right to send their scholars one quarter (a 12 week school term) each free from tuition for the term of nine years, subject to the direction of a committee chosen by the town for that purpose."

The committee chosen consisted of three local residents: Benjamin Clark, Nathaniel Jones, Esquire, and Gardner Ruggles. Three nonresidents were also chosen to serve on the committee: Rev. Luther Wilson of Petersham, Samuel Mixer, Esquire of New Braintree, and Col. Samuel Billings of Hardwick.

Although most writers have designated the early attempts at secondary education as being "private schools," they were partially supported by the town but open to nonresident students at a tuition fee.

With the town population nearing the 2,500 figure, an article was inserted in the town warrant, of 1833 and again in 1835, pertaining to the building of a much needed Town House with space provided for a permanent high school. Both these articles were disregarded.

However, the townspeople, anxious for the opportunity of higher learning, took matters into their own hands and in 1834 established a "private High School" under the tutelage of Moses Mandell, principal.

The summer term of the new school commenced that year on June 30, as noted in an advertisement in the local paper. According to the catalogue of the "Barre High School" in 1834, thirty-three male students and forty-one female students assembled for the fall term in November. Sixty-one of those scholars were from Barre, and the remainder were from the neighboring towns of New Braintree, Phillipston, Petersham, Hardwick, and Oakham.

The *Barre Gazette* and the catalogue reported that the early private school had the year divided into four terms of twelve weeks each. Tuition was \$3.00 per quarter "for the Common English Studies" and \$4.00 for "Language and Ornamentals." Board was listed as being available with "respectable families" for \$0.75 to \$1.50 weekly. The catalogue reminded the young student who desired a teacher training that he or she would "find it highly advantageous to attend."

In March 1835 a notice appeared in the local paper that a "female department would be opened" under the "supervision of Miss Eleuthera F. Howard, a lady eminently qualified." Instruction was offered in drawing, painting, needle, bead, shell work, French, and music. Again, the reader was reminded that "board could be obtained in respectable families at reasonable prices." This ad also stated that the school was to be "removed to the new building, fitted up in the best manner expressly for the accommodation of the High School."

On the 1835 Map of Barre, a High School building was shown located on the south side of Mechanic Street about where the present site of Post #2 American Legion Building is located. Perhaps it was to this "new building" that the ad above referred.

In 1839 a notice in the paper reported that a private school was about to be opened in town in the upper school room of District #1 (over the primary) under the principalship of Mr. H. Freeman. Instruction was to be offered in Algebra, Geometry, Surveying, and Plain Trigonometry, "in addition to the usual branches taught in the Public Schools." The sum of \$3.50 was given as a tuition charge for the term of twelve weeks.

Departments were separate. Both boys' and girls' departments were under the supervision of the principal, "who will attend all recitations in

the English Language and give lectures on the various branches of natural science, accompanied by illustrations from diagrams and other apparatus."

As in the elementary schools, a male instructor conducted the winter terms and "boarded around." Summer courses were taught by female teachers. Teachers listed were: Caroline Holmes, Charlotte Plummer, Louisa Clark, Mary L. Wescott, and Emmeline Page. Summer terms tended to attract a younger student and a larger number of girls. As in the district schools, terms were often extended in length by popular demand as "private schools." Supported by the families, the terms lasted from six to ten weeks with the teacher receiving the tuition for their pay. A Mr. Woods and Miss Clark both conducted successful "private schools" in an available strict schoolhouse.

In the Massachusetts Legislative Document covering the period from 1826 to 1838, it reported that "two private schools were in existence in Barre."

In 1838 a new Town House was constructed with quarters on the second floor for educational purposes. Those quarters were used by the Barre Normal School from 1839 to 1841 when it moved to Westfield to become known as the Westfield Normal School.

In March 1842, an article was inserted in the warrant at the Town Meeting to see if the town would grant the use of the recently vacated school rooms on the second floor of the Town House to Mr. Fiske during the summer "for an academy which he proposes commencing here."

In August of that year, an ad appeared in the local paper announcing the opening of a fall term on September 5, "co-educational with a separate building for girls and that regulations of the school were such that no communication was allowed between the two departments except during the presence of the teacher." Courses offered were given as:

Lower English branches	\$3.50 per quarter
Higher English branches	\$4.50 per quarter
Latin, Greek, and French	\$5.00 per quarter
Music	\$6.00 per quarter
Use of Piano	\$2.00 per quarter
Painting	\$1.50 extra

In May 1844 the town voted that it "grant the school rooms in the Town House for a High School without pay on condition that the teacher keep the same in as good condition and repair as it is now."

In the fall of 1845 an article informed readers of the local paper that they were probably unaware of a seventy pupil High School which was in operation in the town. Mr. A. Wellington of Grafton and a graduate of Yale was principal, "assisted by a lady who instructed French and ornamental branches." The principal wished to stress the fact that the instruc-

tion would be "that usually taught in academies," and Latin and Greek would be offered to those students who planned on attending college.

By late summer in 1852, Barre's population had nearly reached the 3,000 mark. The town responded to the educational needs by adopting the statute of the state and appointed seventeen men to a committee "to consider the establishment of a permanent High School" which was to be held on the second floor of the Town House. The town voted to appropriate \$600 for instruction.

In the school committee report for that year, it stated that a high school of fifty pupils was established with J. B. Clark of New Hampshire as teacher. That first year only a few oral questions were asked of the students on subjects taught in the common schools as the examination for entrance to the high school. No attempt was made to regulate the course of study which was all elective. Questions for admission to the high school were given in Orthography, English Grammar, parsing a simple sentence, Geography, and Mental and Written Arithmetic through fractions and decimals. Not unusual, the committee even then complained of the inadequate moneys allocated for the support of the high school, and that it was most difficult to keep good teachers for more than one year. By 1855, the high school was in its third year. It had increased the enrollment to over sixty pupils under the principalship of Mr. B. Reynolds, who was the same instructor for two years.

The next year Mr. Virgil Howard of New Salem was engaged at a salary of \$700 yearly for four terms of eleven weeks in a term. Mrs. Howard, too, was engaged but as an "assistant at the sum of \$5.00 weekly." In 1857 the student enrollment reached ninety three. The school committee report cited the entrance examination of fifteen students after a "very tender and lenient examination but one was found able to pass...all the rest rejected." A second examination resulted in seven admissions and only five rejections. The enrollment was such that it taxed the teachers, and the overflow of students sat in the Recitation Room. Arrangements were made to put additional benches "to accommodate the unexpected accession of the High School."

In March 1858 the town voted to "dispense with the assistant teacher and reduce expenses of the school." Mr. Thomas G. Grassie was engaged as teacher for the term. He was assisted by his sister Jennie, thus, only two teachers for 93 students!

In March the following year, a state law was enacted which required the local school committee to provide sufficient school books to students at cost. Arrangements were made with Leander Harwood at the Post Office to act as agent for selling school books at a 10% profit to the agent.

Several items that year required the attention of the committee: "small pox had broken out in one of the districts and two students were making themselves unpopular by loitering around the post office."

Again the committee was concerned with the difficulty of retaining quality teaching for as soon as a teacher became experienced in the school, he left for greener pastures at a higher salary. This caused the committee to urge more support for parents in greater interest in their schools and more visitation to the schools.

The committee voted to engage instructors from Framingham Normal School in order to reach their goal of "better quality teaching." The committee provided "each applicant for high school with a printed list of questions constituting standards of admission. Applicants would be questioned by an assigned number to avoid the possibility of charges of partiality." From the underscoring in the record, it is assumed that several of those rejected at the high school examination did not take to the manner of testing too agreeably and charges were hurled at the committee forcing them to draw new rules and regulations for admission.

At a meeting that year, it was also stressed that there was a need for "greater strictness of discipline and that spelling be taught in the high school." It was moved to confer with the high school instructor regarding "more rapid progress in Mathematics and to introduce English Composition."

In May 1859, the school committee voted to close the high school for the summer term with only "nine scholars and no prospects for more." Summer and spring months necessitated more help on the farms. So, in June 1860, Mr. M. Tracy was engaged as high school teacher for \$700 per year for only three terms.

Three years later, J.E. Gleason of Hubbardston was chosen as teacher for \$700 for nine months or \$750 for ten months, "the teacher to leave anytime his usefulness to school is at an end."

In the following year Fred Holland was hired as teacher for three twelve week terms. Numerous teachers' and assistants' names were listed in the annual school committee reports through the years.

A three year course was apparently all that was offered until the mid-1800s when a "fourth year was to commence in the spring." Most courses had been elective until 1864 when course requirements were put into effect. In hopes of decreasing the ever growing problem of poor attendance, a new policy was introduced and required to be put into effect by the state. A card that showed a record of deportment, attendance, and recitation would be sent home to validate the student's record.

Several examples of a Barre High School publication in the mid-1860s called *The Student's Wreath* are on file in the local historical society. The booklets which contain works of composition, poetry, and art, are painstakingly and intricately done by hand.

The *Barre Gazette*, in 1868, printed ads for a private school to be opened in the center district and "competent teachers will be provided." In a later edition of the paper, an item appeared which announced that

Misses Perkins and Smith had successfully opened the school with an enrollment of over seventy pupils. Again, attendance was sporadic with the greatest attendance during the fall and winter terms.

Examinations and exhibitions were held at the end of the school term to which the public was invited. Students declaimed or read a composition or poem to show their school accomplishments.

In 1872 Harold Wilder of Brooklyn, New York was hired as principal of the high school. That same year a Teacher's Institute was held in Barre under the direction of the State Board of Education, and over one hundred teachers from all areas surrounding the town attended the five day session.

In 1873, according to the record, the town took two major steps. It chose a woman, Mrs. C.A. Smith, as a member of the School Committee, and the "town authorized the committee to incorporate the High School with an Academy so that proper arrangements might be made for the Academy to open in the fall of 1873." A communication from the State Board of Education reminded the local committee that "in order to retain State appropriation, the Academy must be under the direction of the School Committee."

Wilder was given the salary of one thousand dollars per year and half the tuition from the nonresident students for teaching. Later he was given the total tuition fees. It was reported that twenty new students were accepted by the Academy that year. Compliments were given freely by the committee, not only on the progress of the Academy, but on Wilder's performance as a teacher. He continued in his role as principal until 1879 when, due to poor health, he was relieved of his administrative duties.

Again in the late 1880s the word "Academy" was dropped and replaced with the term "High School." Just what date "graduation" was first conducted is unclear, but on record is a graduation program of 1879 when four students were graduated. The "Graduating Exercise" by the class of 1881 at the Town Hall consisted of essays, declamations, recitations, music, and readings. Diplomas were presented to five graduates. In an obituary notice of Maria (Bacon) Barr in 1934, it mentioned that she was a member of one of the first graduating classes in the Barre High School in 1870.

The school rooms on the second floor of the Town House were "renovated and improved at the cost of \$416.26." In 1886 the town voted "to grant diplomas to those reaching standards required as in the previous years." The janitor that year was to be paid \$.05 weekly during the fall and spring terms, and \$1.00 weekly during the winter term.

The local paper in the early 1890s began to report the overcrowding conditions at the High School, and the urgent need for a new high school building. Ideas of adding to the Center School and renovations of old



Henry Woods School Building, West St., Barre

quarters were rebuffed by the press. Even a suggestion of the site was hinted by the editors. Perhaps the need for new school quarters was a factor in the formation of a Barre High School Alumni Association in the fall of 1896 at a meeting in the Barre Library auditorium. Plans were made to meet annually.

Responding to the urging of his townsmen and to the need of his community, Henry Woods, a native son and prominent merchant and businessman in national and international circles, presented as a gift to the town on August 25, 1900, a new brick building and deed of the lot on West Street. Dedication exercises were held on September 12, 1900 at the Congregational Church. The new building was named the Henry Woods School in honor of the generous benefactor who died December 31, 1901. Several years later his heirs equipped and outfitted a laboratory and kitchen for the building.

The Henry Woods building became too small for the fast growing number of high school students. Suggestions for the need of a new structure were discussed for many years prior to the decision to go regional. Perhaps one of the most ardent supporters and participants in the planning for the new building was Leroy Dawson, who became principal of Barre High School in the fall of 1926 and remained in the position until the fall of 1966 when poor health forced him to retire.

Due to the disastrous fire in 1966 that leveled the Center School, which had housed the seventh and eighth grades, students attended the Henry Woods building in double sessions. In September 1967 the new Quabbin Regional Junior-Senior High School opened. Barre High School

ceased to exist. The students from the town of Barre were now joined with students from the towns of Hardwick, Hubbardston, and Oakham.

Upon the opening of Quabbin Regional High School, the Henry Woods school building, still under the jurisdiction of the Barre School Committee, became the office quarters for the Regional School District, School Union #63. It also was the home of the newly formed Golden Age Club for a short period. The front classrooms were used for several years by the exceptionally active Golden Age Club until the late 1970s when they acquired their own quarters, the former Barre Methodist Church building on Common Street. In 1977, the northwest room of the first floor was remodeled and refurbished for a Selectmen's Room. The former Superintendent's office became the office for the Administrative Assistant.

January 6, 1981, the Barre Town House was badly damaged by fire and required extensive reconstruction. The offices of Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Police Department, and Assessors were moved to the Henry Woods building where they were housed in temporary quarters. At the 1978 Annual Town Meeting, voters unanimously endorsed the transfer of the administration of the former Henry Woods school building on West Street from the School Committee to the Barre Board of Selectmen.

This most attractive architectural example of a 1900 school structure is known as the Henry Woods Building and would be extremely difficult to duplicate today. Although far from its original purpose, the building is a town office building, which provides office space and meeting rooms for many town committees and commissions.

CENTER SCHOOL

For more than a century, Barre children marched, stumbled, dragged their feet, or ran through heavy, dark green doors into the Center School. Although the doors bore no signs, boys always used the north entrance and girls the south. The history of this legendary school seems to have been accepted with such a matter-of-fact attitude that we find no record as to exactly when those doors first opened.

In the mid-1800s when Barre Center flourished as the shopping hub for surrounding villages, it also had become an important stagecoach junction. New families came in increasing numbers who settled within walking distance of the common, which already was circled with churches, a variety of stores, hotels, hostleries, many substantial houses, and one small school. New homes were being built, the citizenry multiplied, and enrollment in District School Number 1 (dimensions 29 ft x 32 ft) was growing beyond capacity. According to school committee reports from those years (the late 1840s), parents were heatedly protesting "dilapidated" school conditions, declaring that student's "indisposition to study" was due, not to lack of intellect, but "to the unhealthy,



Center School, School Street, Barre

dungeon-like schoolhouse.” Although particular dates have not come to light, it is certain that between 1851 and 1854 parental insistence on larger educational quarters were met, and a new schoolhouse rose on land down the hill behind Town Hall of Barre. This must have been the second District No. 1 building, but the third location for a school. The earliest school was on the site of the Town Hall. When that important building was planned prior to 1839, No. 1 Schoolhouse had to be moved possibly onto the Mechanic Street lot across the road from where Center School stood. Today, American Legion Post 2 is located there.

A school committee report of the very early 1850s, refers to the “completion of a sumptuous new schoolhouse, an ornament to the village and an honor to the community.” One important clue for dating this school lay in its construction. It was noted that the sturdy beams of the building had been laboriously hand hewn. This placed the working date of the facility prior to 1855, when the newly invented circular saw became a standard, labor, saving tool which was used by carpenters. Moreover, on an 1855 town map, the street running east from The Common, formerly listed as Templeton Road, bears a new name which was that of School Street.

For several years, only sons and daughters of families within District No. 1 attended the new grammar school. Later, as various districts closed their neighborhood school houses, the first, established, centrally, located district school included all children of elementary age. It thus became known simply and descriptively as Center School.

The two-storied structure included four, good sized rooms (two on the first floor for the youngest grades, two on the second floor for the upper grades, which was reached by an angled staircase).

Most rooms were home to two grades, and all lessons were taught by one teacher. Later, drawing and music supervisors, who moved between schools, were hired for enrichment of the curriculum. The principalship (sometimes held by women, sometimes by men) always fell to the instructor of the upper grades. With no office space other than desk drawers and a small closet or two, each principal took responsibility for keeping discipline, ordering supplies, submitting accounts, and hearing parental complaints.

Youngsters living nearby always trudged home for noon dinner. Others arrived each morning carrying lunch pails whose contents of which were eaten at the desks. Today's accepted "hot lunch program" was not a consideration until the late twenties, when first grade teacher Lila Smith sought permission to serve sandwiches and soup, which was heated on a small electric plate in one corner of the first grade room. This hot meal was for the children who lived at a distance from the school who had been known as the lunch pail pupils. Teams of older girls were granted the honor of assisting Mrs. Smith. Years later, when a lunch program which was headed by Mrs. Jessie Rice became established in the Barre Grange rooms, Center School children marched in line, with a teacher, up the hill in all weather conditions to the Town Hall for their lunch.

Center School sat benignly in the middle of a property running between Mechanic and School Streets. Dissecting walks led to the small, covered porticoes shielding each entrance. Everywhere the ground was speckled with grassy patches. Large areas were bared by the constant treads of children's feet.

According to the season, lively youngsters spent wonderful recesses (each gender adhering to his/her own side of the yard) marking hopscotch diagrams, shooting marbles, jumping rope, playing ball, or making snow forts. Nobody considered amenities such as swings or see-saws. For a brief time in the 1940s swings were erected. They were removed after a girl broke her arm, leaving only the poles which one could climb.

When a district school closed and youngsters transferred to Center School, transportation was provided, by law, for those who lived beyond a two mile limit. At first, those children reached school on foot or by horse and wagon driven by parents. Much later, when automobiles became common, which was around World War I, neighbors or townsmen with large cars were pressed into contracting school routes. Not until the late twenties do we note the inauguration of bus routes.

Just when the nineteenth turned into the twentieth century, the Henry

Woods High School, on West Street, reached completion. At that time, one room on the east corner of the first floor was set aside for seventh and eighth grade classes which released space in the grammar school in order to house the first six elementary grades more comfortably. Such an arrangement endured for almost three decades. The high school enrollment required every bit of space within the brick walls of the Henry Woods building.

This displacement of seventh and eighth graders required thoughtful measures by the school committee which resulted in the addition of two classrooms moving into the Center School. This decision settled all eight elementary grades under the same roof in September 1929. Just prior to the 1929-1930 school year a three room addition (two floors and a basement room) was constructed. Such a satisfactory solution continued until after World War II when the juvenile population burgeoned. At that time, Barre came to grips with the harsh realization that the venerable structure on School Street could not be properly enlarged again to contain the increasing numbers of young children setting forth to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. Therefore, taxpayers urgently voted to erect a new elementary school, and on September 13, 1953 the townspeople proudly dedicated the Ruggles Lane School.

Justifiably and honorably, the Center School was retired for the first time in approximately one hundred years. No children marched into the halls or up the dark, worn stairway. This respectful, quiet period lasted only briefly. Mere months passed before officials realized the primary schools would be increasing far beyond estimates or predictions. Astonishingly but undeniably, space at Ruggles Lane School would be insufficient within one year. Problems of bulging enrollment along with a teacher shortage throughout the system forced the school committee's immediate decision to consolidate teachers and all seventh and eighth grade students at the Ruggles Lane and High Plains Schools. The Center School was reopened. Thus it happened that the Center School, like a reliable grandparent, was pressed back into service. Even so, crowded conditions became evident there immediately. Single classrooms were divided into two rooms for the accommodation of multi-sectioned grades. A lunch room was designed in the basement. Keeping pace with enlarging numbers of school age youngsters appeared to be well-nigh impossible.

Despite the crowded quarters, the school stoically continued as a Junior High School for eleven and one-half busy years. During a bitter night in February 1966, many townspeople awakened with horror to the sight of a scarlet sky and harsh sounds of sirens careening into Barre from every neighboring town. The Center School, engulfed and gulped by flames, was being consumed while crowds of folk watched, shivering and incredulous, the modest landmark vanished. This school had stood

as the symbol of early learning for generations of the children of the town. In the few hours between the dark and the daylight of that February 23rd, it became a memory.

A ONE ROOM SCHOOL...LIFE IN THE SOUTH BARRE PRIMARY SCHOOL

In the early twentieth century there were four one room schools left in the community: Christian Hill, Rice Village, White Valley and the South Barre Primary or Italian School. The South Barre Primary School took care of the five and six year old children of the Italian immigrants who came to work at the Barre Wool Combing Company. These children could not speak or understand English. They spoke only the Italian language in their homes.

In 1906 the Barre Wool Combing Company built this school and called it the South Barre Primary School. Later the High Plains School, Roger Langley School, was built.

In 1911 and 1912 according to a Town Report there were only about ten Italian families in the Town of Barre. They were: Thomas Costello, a cobbler; Tony Ingenui, a barber; Santo Mazzio, store owner; and George Terrio, a carpenter. The others worked at the Barre Wool Combing Company. Their names were G. Nasise, S. Poleo, Frank



South Barre Italian School built in 1906.

Recupero and John Romanis. By 1913 there were so many Italian families immigrating from Italy to South Barre that the Barre Wool Company built houses for these people near the school. Between 1913 and 1927 there were more than fifty Italian families living in South Barre.

The children started school in the South Barre Primary School. Since it was filled to capacity with Italian children, it became known as the Italian School. Some families also called it the Baby School. The building stood next to the Italian section on the left side of Valley Road before the intersection and the bridge.

There were two grades with the composite of forty-six children. The ordinary problems of the educating of these children were compounded by the fact that they could not speak or understand English. Miss Flora Corrigan was the teacher from 1916 to 1919. Following Miss Corrigan there were two teachers: Miss Georgia Stickney and Miss Alice Slein. After 1919 the population increased, and many more children began attending the school. The two teachers needed assistance as in 1922 there were one hundred and twenty one children in the first grade. Some of the children were transferred to the High Plains School and some to Barre Plains.

In 1919 sixty-one Italian men formed a group and requested an evening school to help them learn the American way of life. These evening classes continued for about three years.

In 1922 a music supervisor wrote: "It has been possible to do some work in music with the South Barre Evening School. It has proven an inspiration to hear the men sing their own beautiful folk and national songs and to develop and carry their inherent love for music into the Americanization by teaching them our national and folk songs."

In 1924 the School Committee considered building a larger school, but this was never done. In 1925 a rule was made that children must be six years old on or before January 1st in order to enter school. This cut down considerably on the number of children entering the first grade.

Miss Verna Wheet (Wine Connington) taught in this Italian School from 1927 to 1931 at \$950 per year. Later, she was given an increase of \$100 per year. There was an average of thirty-five boys and girls enrolled each year. Each year a few students were retained. These students could speak and understand some English so they were a great help to the communication problems between teacher and new students.

The first year that Miss Wheet was teaching in the school there were over sixty children who came to school the first day for her first grade class. After checking the Town Report for their names and their birth dates, it was necessary to send about half of them home. They were not old enough to be part of the educational process as it had been established in 1925. She was left with thirty five students which was a much more manageable number of first graders. Both parents of the children

worked in the Barre Wool, and they were anxious for their children to be educated. Also it had been the custom in Italian villages to provide care for small children while the parents worked in the factories. The Italian families felt that the school was a safe haven for their children while they worked at the Barre Wool or Nornay Worsted Companies. During the first year of teaching, it was necessary for Miss Wheet to become familiar with fifty Italian names. She had completed some practice teaching in two different Italian schools in Framingham and assumed that was the reason that Mr. Rush, the Superintendent, had assigned her to the Italian School in South Barre.

Miss Wheet lived with seven teachers who taught at the High Plains School. They had a cook, Jane Hylan, and a janitor, Mr. Bellows who tended the stove in the house and was also the janitor at the High Plains School. The teachers paid board to the town treasurer, Mr. Clyde Swan. Each teacher was responsible for the care of her room and shared the housekeeping tasks.

The one room schools were similar in facilities. There was an outside toilet, no electricity, and a large stove in the corner of the room for heat. The Superintendent of Schools visited twice a year. The music supervisor and school nurse visited regularly. Mr. Petraccone, the janitor, who took care of the stove and carried water each day for drinking and was invaluable to the maintenance of the school.

The teachers task involved not only the education of the children but also the health and well-being of the child. The teacher became the extension of the mother and was asked to perform chores beyond the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The children came to school and said their mother wanted the teacher to pull a loose tooth or take care of a sore, which was most likely impetigo. Some of the little ones had pediculosis. Children were uncomfortable with the English language or shy in the educational situation. Children who were sick were often cared for by the teacher who was responsible for the cleanup of accidents. Miss Wheet caught scarlet fever and was hospitalized at the Belmont Hospital in Worcester. Dr. Cheetham, the town doctor, took her to the hospital in his personal car as there was no ambulance service. Scarlet fever was a dreaded disease at that time. All of her pictures, bedding and some clothes had to be thrown out the window and burned.

Fortunately all experiences were not overwhelming. Every day the children walked to meet Miss Wheet. They all called her Miss Sweet! Even, in 1992, some of those same children grown into adults say that they thought her name was Miss Sweet!

The children loved to sing and play the toy instruments. They were very musical and had a toy band. At the end of the day when the academics for the day was complete, Miss Wheet would read stories to the children. They enjoyed performing the stories in their own form of

plays. They especially liked Epaminondas, which was the story about a little boy who was told by his mother to be careful how he stepped on those pies that she had set on the door steps to cool. He was careful how he stepped on those pies. He stepped right in the middle of every one! At the end of the story the children were out of their chairs and pretending to step in the middle of every one of the pies.

On Columbus Day there would be a big celebration, because it was an Italian-oriented holiday.

Some of the children went home from school at recess time on the first day of school. Their mothers brought them back by the ears. When asked why they ran home one said, "The teacher talked too fast."

Some of the Italian family names of those who attended the Primary School were: Aliquo, Borelli, Cornacchia, Ciccone, Cirelli, Coppolino, Capello, Caruso, Chilleri, DeBartelo, DeLibero, DiRuzza, Foster, Femino, Genovese, Giarusso, Izzi, Martone, Marconi, Onorato, Palano, Petrucello, Petraccone, Richiazzi, Romano, Roselle, Rossi, Spano, Sidote, Sottile, Staiti, Salvatore, Trifilo, Tomasello, Tominello, Vilardo, Vilardi and Valente. These names are the heritage of the village of South Barre. Their education started in the Baby School. These families have become an integral part of the development of Barre. Many of them have succeeded in business enterprises in the community; become doctors, lawyers, teachers, musicians; and aspired to active leadership in the town government of Barre. Many have served their adopted country in the wars.

Miss Wheet did not learn the Italian language. She just tried to understand them with a lot of patience and love. Her dedication to the Italian School is still remembered by many Italian families. They speak fondly of Miss Sweet (Wheet)!

"Bell Used in Italian School - South Barre"

The bell was given to Miss Wheet (Mrs. Verna Wine Connington) for the Barre Historical Society in the Fall of 1990. It had been sixty years since it had been used to call the children to school for the morning and afternoon sessions and recess.

In 1990 Dolly Thorng was visiting her niece, Denise Melina, and while they were cleaning the china cabinet, the niece took the bell off the top shelf. She told Dolly that the bell was from the Italian School in South Barre. At that time the niece felt that it was appropriate to send the bell back to Barre with Dolly.

Barre has been left with the school bell that rang so many little children to their education. This bell is a fond memory for many families in South Barre and remains the symbol of the teacher of the One Room School.

HIGH PLAINS SCHOOL

The High Plains School, originally a four room building, was built in 1911. It was subsidized by the Barre Wool Combing Company. Later in the 1920s two wings were added to the school. Miss Alice Slein, then a teacher in the little one room school in South Barre, walked with her pupils, who carried their supplies to the High Plains School, to occupy the two new wings. She was a third grade teacher and remained in one of those rooms until her retirement in 1974.

Anita Rich was the first principal of the building. Roger Langley, for whom the school was later named, became principal in 1943. He assumed the principalship when Nathaniel Phillips retired. Phyllis Anderson was appointed Assistant Principal to Roger Langley. She held that position until her retirement in 1976.

The school had a staff of eight teachers who taught grades one through eight until 1954. The staff was:

Grade 1	Alice Hunting	Grade 5	Katherine Mullin
Grade 2	Phyllis Anderson	Grade 6	Teresa Miller
Grade 3	Alice Slein	Grade 7	Mary Curran
Grade 4	Beryl Langley	Grade 8	Roger Langley
Music Supervisor	Helen Chase		
Art Teacher	Lucy Dorritt Rice		



High Plains School/Roger Langley School, South Barre

Ruggles Lane School was completed in 1953. All pupils went to that school for the year 1953-54. The next year the seventh and eighth grade pupils of the entire town began attending the Center School, which had been re-opened due to overcrowding. In 1954, High Plains became a school for grades one through six for pupils from the High Plains area, Barre Plains, South Barre, and Worcester Road.

There was no hot lunch program in those days and most children went home for their lunch. Those who brought their lunch to school would eat in a teacher supervised room. In later years the school lunch program was adopted, and one end of the basement was remodeled into a cafeteria. Hot meals were prepared at Ruggles Lane School and transported to the school for serving.

The school practiced the procedure that boys and girls were separated from one another by playground areas and school entrances. The boys had an area for ball games. The girls used the west side of the building where there were swings and seesaws.

During these years a spring event of a parade of decorated carriages and bicycles was held. All pupils walked to Florence Hall where the decorations on the carriages and bicycles were judged and prizes were given. These festivities were always followed by refreshments and games.

In 1966-67 the two schools found themselves with an uneven distribution of students, and the balance of sex was also quite unevenly distributed within the school. In the fifth grade there was only one girl. She was given the option of enrolling in the Ruggles Lane School. She chose to remain at the High Plains. The next year, the school system underwent redistricting. All first and second grade pupils in the entire town were bussed to the High Plains. Ruggles Lane School became a school for the third through the sixth grade. This proved to be very satisfactory as it provided the space for the formation of the first kindergarten class in 1973.

Through the years the administration and staff have changed, but the unique feature of a home atmosphere of caring for children in a loving and caring way has continued. As the last class left the building in November 1989 an era in the school had ended. Ceremonies were held, the children sang the School Song for the last time, and memories flooded the minds of the many persons present.

Each pupil who has passed through the doors of the Roger Langley School has been touched by the dedicated staff who taught in the school. High Plains School does not welcome eager faces through the doors anymore, but many pupils fondly remember their classes and teachers in the school.

STETSON SCHOOL

In 1899, Henry August Pevear of Lynn, Massachusetts was a 71 year-old "millionaire and philanthropist" who had spent most of his adult life directing many family enterprises including a particularly successful leather business. He wished to invest a portion of his fortune in a home for boys. Although his mother had died when Henry Pevear was only twelve, he realized that the precepts she had imparted to him had influenced the course of his life. Conscious of the fact that there were many homeless boys who would benefit from placement in a facility that would mold character in much the same way as his mother's teachings, he began to search for a location for "Stetson Home" in memory of his beloved mother, Mary Ann Stetson Pevear.

Pevear was quick to gain ownership of a mortgage on the property which was known as Ashlawn, that was located on South Street about one mile south of the Barre Common. Mr. William T. Ash, also originally from Lynn, had purchased the property which had formerly been farmed by Addison Holland. This farm was a consolidation of at least two farms that had belonged to the Adams and Holden families. Ash had heavily mortgaged the approximately 150-acre property in order to establish a breeding farm for carriage horses. Due to a depression in 1893 and the added expense of beginning a 150-foot long horse barn, Ash's farm failed, and the mortgage was purchased by a Hiller family of New York City.

Pevear shrewdly recognized the potential of the partially constructed barn and had the plans redesigned. The building became the main structure for his "home for orphans and other homeless boys in needy circumstances." It was decided that boys from the ages of seven to seventeen years from the towns of Lynn and Barre were to be accepted and to be instructed in the field of agriculture.



Stetson Home, Barre, 1898

Affairs of the home were governed by a Board of Trustees who acted on all applications for admission. At the time of the establishment, the Board of Trustees were members of the Pevear family and their trusted business associates. These trustees were charged with seeing that the boys of Stetson Home were provided with the "advantages of a Christian Home and a good education."

The *Lynn Daily Item* of August 12, 1901 reported that "the colors of the home are colonial buff and white with green blinds, and the Home is a fine landmark from afar. Two roof windows have been altered and a cupola or tower raised to admit a clock."

During the summers, Mr. Pevear and his family were residents of the home on the property. His son, William A. Pevear, shared in the overseeing of the estate. In 1901 the home had a staff that included a head farmer, a coachman, three farm hands, a laundress, and a cook. The home opened with just two boys. Ten more were added in the spring of that first year. Eight boys were from Lynn, two from Barre, one from Salem, and one from Puerto Rico. The older boys were immediately delegated farm and house chores. All attended the Methodist Sunday School, and most boys participated in the choir.

The first superintendent was the Reverend Mr. C. H. Walter, a Methodist clergyman, who for many years was in charge of the New England Conference. Mrs. Walter was matron of the home. She had experience as a teacher and pastoral counselor.

According to the *Daily Item* article, "Boys never had a better place to grow in health and vigor than in the Home." Mr. Pevear repeatedly expressed his intention that it be a home, not an institution.

Over the mantle in the dining hall was inscribed a favorite rhyme of Mrs. Pevear:

"If I were a cobbler, I'd make it my pride
The best of cobblers to be
If I were a tinker, none other besides
Could mend an old kettle like me."

A dozen years later another article in the *Lynn Evening Item* reported on the condition of the home by stating that after "passing the mansion house and the other residences, the summer homes of Henry A. Pevear and his sons, one enters the grounds of the home by graveled walks and past lawns that are kept in such excellent condition by the boys of the home themselves. The dormitory (on the second floor of the main building) is arranged with thirty five beds and is entirely unheated, and the officers state their belief that the excellent health of the boys from year to year is largely due to that fact." The article described an active farm of 125 acres "divided into tillage, woodland, and buildings." All the

boys were employed on the farm in various ways: landscaping, preparing of silage as winter food for the animals, caring for the hogs, repairing machines, tending vegetables, maintaining roads and walks, wiring, and managing nursery and orchard stock.

Teachers provided both primary and secondary training at the home. Devotional exercises were held every morning. Conditions for admittance were listed as:

“He must be an orphan or homeless

He must be sound, mentally and physically

He must be free from criminal taint and tendency

He must be clean in bed and clothes

He must be seven and not over fourteen years of age

He must be under the management of the trustees, one of whom
must be his guardian.”

It was during these years that the home was self-sufficient because of the produce of the farm. In the year 1913 the home produced 400 quarts of raspberries, 1,500 heads of cabbage, 70 bushels of potatoes, 300 bushels of mangle wurzels (cattle beets), 30 bushels of peas, 25 bushels of onions, 15 bushels of beets, 40 bushels of carrots, 30 bushels of turnips, 27 bushels of cucumbers, 20 bushels of tomatoes, 3 tons of pumpkins, 77 barrels of apples, 5 barrels of pears, 10 bushels of parsnips, 8 bushels of muskmelons, and enough fodder for the bull, 20 cows, 7 heifers, 2 boars, 8 sows, 21 shoats, and 72 chickens.

Therefore, when the home's chief benefactor, Henry A. Pevear, died at his home in Lynn on May 14, 1914 at the age of eighty six, the endowment he had settled on the home seemed more than ample for many years ahead.

Over the years the home did continue to prosper under the guidance of the trustees and changing superintendents. For forty two years the home was directed by Charles E. and Ruth Cutting. For nearly twenty more years Arnold and Doris Robinson carefully cared for the home as directors. The home offered friendly guidance and strict supervision of hundreds of boys, many of whom became noted citizens. For the first forty years of existence of the home, the original rules of seventy five percent of the boys were to be from Lynn.

Subsequent to World War II, when the state took over the care of public wards and transferred the supervision and care from the private sector, numerous rules and regulations were instituted regarding foster homes and child care facilities. The necessary increase in staff, growing costs of pupil care, building maintenance, and spiraling inflation nearly drained the income from Stetson Home's endowment fund. A disastrous fire destroyed the barn on the property and definitely ended what had

been the rapidly diminishing farm aspect of the home.

In the 1970s for the first time since its founding, the home had no members of the Pevear family on the list of trustees. In 1978 two separate corporations were established to maintain and operate the facility. Stetson Home Inc. owned and maintained the property. Stetson School Inc. operated a school for emotionally disturbed boys referred by various state agencies. Funding was provided by these agencies at a rate established by the Commonwealth's Rate Setting Commission.

Recent renovations have been completed to adequately care for and educate thirty four boys who have special needs.

After the death of Alden Johnson, former owner and publisher of the *Barre Gazette* and a trustee of the home, the trustees purchased the recently constructed one story, brick and metal building south of the home which had formerly been the Barre Publishing Company. This structure was renovated into living quarters for ten boys and a gymnasium. The structure was given the name "Johnson House."

Two of the old residences were torn down as they had outlived their usefulness. In 1992 the property is still overseen by five trustees of the home, and the school is ably operated by the trustees of Stetson School. The character of the home may have changed, but Henry A. Pevear's intent to serve those most in need is still in effect.

RUGGLES LANE SCHOOL

In the early 1950s when the Center School was considered outdated and unsafe, plans were approved to build the Ruggles Lane School. This school was to replace the Center School.

Ruggles Lane School, an ultra modern facility of the day, opened in



Planting Trees for Christa McAuliffe, 1986, Ruggles Lane School

September of 1953. It contained grades 1-8. The High Plains School in South Barre also had eight grades. As the old Barre High School did not have a gymnasium, the Ruggles Lane School included plans for a standard sized gymnasium that the high school could use for basketball games, dances, and the proms.

However, the plans did not provide for the growing town, and even in the first year of operation the school was overcrowded. In 1954 the Center School was reopened to accommodate grades 7 and 8 from the Ruggles Lane School and the High Plains School. Plans were made for a four room expansion of the Ruggles Lane.

In 1973 when the kindergarten was incorporated into the school curriculum, the Ruggles Lane and High Plains School Systems were united. Kindergarten, grade one, and grade two were held at the High Plains School. Grade three through six attended the Ruggles Lane School.

In the 1980s the increasing population caused overcrowding in both elementary schools. The study committee determined that it would be more feasible to expand the Ruggles Lane facility to meet all the elementary needs. The High Plains School, which had been named the Roger Langley School later, was closed. The renovations, which were completed in the fall of 1989, included a new wing of classrooms, a new cafeteria, a new gymnasium, two resource rooms, a media center, and two kindergarten rooms. Everything was functionally and aesthetically excellent.

Principal for 36 years, John Cirelli served his first three years as a teacher. Principal John E. Hodgen resigned to become Administrative Assistant to District Superintendent of Schools, John Houston. Recently the new gymnasium was dedicated to John Cirelli to honor him for his devoted work to the elementary education in Barre.

In 1953 Superintendent Houston described the building as "the finest educational surroundings... to give the students and an educational environment second to none." This school has been able to maintain that description.

QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The original high school in Barre was given to the town by Henry Woods in 1900 and served the community admirably for many years as an educational facility. Modern technological developments and expanded school curricula created requirements and standards which were impossible to meet in the Center School and Henry Woods High School facilities. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the citizens of Barre encouraged the study of a regional school district which would allow a number of neighboring towns to combine resources to update school facilities and programs.



Quabbin Regional High School, South St., Barre.

In November 1957 after several years of study, the Regional School District Planning Board on a Barre-Hubbardston Junior-Senior High School grades 7-12, published a comprehensive report explaining and supporting the establishment of a two-town regional district for the purpose of constructing and operating a 500 pupil junior-senior high school for the students residing in Barre and Hubbardston. Members of the Planning Board were: Barre - Dr. John H. Warner, John M. Gould, and Clarence H. Clark; Hubbardston - Weikko Holopainen, Jane T. Coffin, and Viola Wojdylak. During the study regional planning discussions were held with Petersham, Hardwick, and Westminster. No satisfactory working agreement could be made with any of these towns. The state offered financial incentives calculated to be 65% of the recommended \$1,000,000 facility and to be 100% reimbursement for all planning costs. In addition, the state would pay 100% of the pupil transportation for the regional school, and the annual state aid for school operations would be increased by 15%.

In spite of the need for improved educational facilities and the significant financial incentives offered by the state, the Barre town meeting voted against the proposal to form the two-town regional school district. Hubbardston voters approved.

In May of 1960, the State Department of Education, in cooperation with the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, conducted a survey of the Barre secondary school facilities and recommended that Barre solve its problems by joining with neighboring towns to form a Regional School District which would include grades seven through twelve.

Barre, again, joined a Regional School District Board to consider the formation of a regional school district to include the four towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, and Oakham. This twelve member Board, composed of the following persons: Barre - James Chilleri, Leroy Dawson, and Gilbert Upham; Hardwick - Joseph Valardi, Dr. Charles Hinckley, and Stephanie Socha; Hubbardston - Weikko Holopainen, Robert Dill, and Norman Gallagher; Oakham - Roger Lonergan, Max Kuhner, and Willard Rutherford, published its findings and recommendations in December 1962. In their brochure the board stated: "It is the opinion of this board that the best answer to the immediate and long range educational planning is the formation of a regional school district for students of grades seven through twelve in the four towns."

The Regional School District was established by a vote of the towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, and Oakham on February 2, 1963.

The children of the four towns in the district were invited to submit suggestions for naming the school district. Among names like Naquag, Massasoit, and Jacob Riis, the name of Quabbin appeared in the greatest numbers. The district was named the Quabbin Regional School District. The officials announced a contest for an official seal. Mrs. Jean Dorsey won the contest ahead of about eighty entries. Jean had studied the history of Quabbin with Helen Connington, then curator of the Barre Historical Society. They found that King Quabin, an Indian Chief, ruled over the territory at the junction of the east and west branches of the



Smith Homestead, 1895, location of present Quabbin Regional High School, Barre.

Swift River where once was the village of Greenwich. Close by the area were Great Quabin and Little Quabin Mountains named after King Quabin. The name Quabin meant "many waters" and until the end of the nineteenth century was spelled with just one "b." How the change in spelling came about is still a matter of conjecture. A replica of the seal can be seen on the wall in the main entrance of the Quabbin Regional High School.

In June 1963, the Quabbin Regional School District Committee voted to engage Korslund, LeNormand & Quann, of Norwood, MA, as school architect. In August 1963, they voted to purchase 75 acres of land on South Street from Mr. George Smith for the sum of \$21,500.

In September 1963, the Quabbin Regional School District Committee voted to incur a debt of \$112,900 to acquire the site and pay for architectural and engineering plans by the issue of bonds or notes. Because such an action required approval at each member town meeting, it was at this stage that Hardwick voters expressed serious opposition to the regional building plans by not approving their share of the proposed debt (\$19,509). After reconsidering the proposal three times and refusing to approve it, the town of Hardwick voted to withdraw from the Quabbin Regional School District in October of 1964 but rescinded this action a month later in late November of 1964. In February of 1965 the architect presented plans which would cost \$2,272,800 for the total project. In October 1965, bids for construction were considered and low bidders, Del Signore Construction Company, general contractor, and Piermarocchi Brothers, sewage disposal, were awarded contracts a month later, after the State Building Assistance Commission reported approval of final plans and specifications.

The Quabbin Regional School was described, "as one which would be a modern school building containing features and areas which were proven by time and experience to be of major educational value to pupils and the community." The structure would be a two story brick building, with shops, mechanical drawing room, and storage facilities located on a ground level floor under the gymnasium.

An important feature was the planning to ensure easy and economical expansion of the building if necessary to provide for future increases in enrollment. Some of the most modern special features were: an auditorium seating approximately 620 persons and divided into three large group instructional areas to assure maximum efficient use of the space; a library designed to seat fifty pupils and shelving space for over 11,000 volumes; a language laboratory for developing foreign language skills; a gymnasium large enough to be divided by folding partitions to provide physical education for both boys and girls at all grade levels; and a cafeteria serviced by a modern, commercial kitchen. This cafeteria would be divided by folding partitions to provide space for study hall and large group meetings.

Athletic fields would be provided for adequate outdoor athletic and recreational facilities. The curricula offered aimed to broaden and enrich programs that were being offered in the area schools. Subjects covered would include English, Modern and Traditional Mathematics, Languages, Social Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Advanced Science, Bookkeeping, Office Machines, Typing, General Business, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Art, Music, and Physical Education. Guidance services would be an important feature of the program. Specialized activities such as band, orchestra, chorus, dramatics, and a comprehensive athletic program would be an integral part of the curriculum.

The Quabbin Regional School District agreement approved by vote in all four member towns provided for an eleven member Quabbin Regional School Committee. This board was to be comprised of five members from Barre, three members from Hardwick, two members from Hubbardston, and one member from Oakham. Members of the first Regional committee were: Barre - Louis Panaccione, John H. Bentley, John M. Gould, Paul M. Jordan, and Wayne Cauvin; Hardwick - John H. Ritter, John Eysenbach, and Mrs. Chloe Moriarty; Hubbardston - Weikko Holopainen, and Richard Lyon, Jr.; Oakham - Mrs. Mary Parsons. Mr. John Ritter was elected to be first chairman. Mrs. Daisy Widing, then resident of Oakham, was elected Secretary to the Committee. She served in that capacity for 28 years.

One of the earliest decisions made by the School Committee was that of seeking a superintendent. Dr. Charles L. Bowlby, retired Superintendent of Schools from Wachusett Regional School District, was employed as Acting Superintendent from July 1, 1965 to June 30, 1967. In the words of the regional school committee upon completion of Dr. Bowlby's contract:

"Our youth shall be the fortunate benefactors of his outstanding contributions, and we hereby attest that Dr. Charles L. Bowlby has gained through his services to the Quabbin Regional School District the distinction of being an Educational Leader, Extraordinary. Through his leadership, we now have a comprehensive curriculum, an outstanding staff, a set of well formulated policies, and a thoroughly equipped and highly functional facility ready to serve our youth and communities."

A disastrous fire totally destroyed the old Center School building in February 1966 which required double sessions at the Henry Woods High School building. In the fall of that same year principal Leroy Dawson, who had been a teacher and principal at the high school for forty years, was disabled with a heart attack and unable to complete the final year for

the Barre High School.

The Quabbin Regional Junior-Senior High School opened the doors on September 18, 1967. Eight hundred and thirty five students from the four member town started their educational experiences within the new school setting. The 61 teachers were employed for the initial year with 50% holding masters degrees or better.

The Quabbin Regional School Committee had voted to seek a Superintendent of Schools who would also provide management leadership for the elementary schools in the four towns under the direction of a Union #63 Joint Committee. The first superintendent to serve in such a capacity was Corridon F. Trask, Jr. who started his duties on July 1, 1967 and continued until his retirement in August of 1986.

Believing that our public schools could be more effectively managed with much greater financial help from the state if the regional school district was changed to a K-12 system, Superintendent Trask worked with several different study committees to provide an agreement that would be acceptable to the citizens and yet unite the elementary and secondary school systems of the four towns under a single administrative structure. In the spring of 1984 voters in all of the four towns supported such a change in the regional agreement and also added New Braintree as a fifth member of the Quabbin Regional School District.

Superintendent Trask was succeeded by Maureen Marshall, who had previously been a science teacher at Quabbin Regional and Assistant Superintendent at West Boylston.



Interior of the Barre High School, Assembly Hall

LANDMARKS



TOWN POUND

In the early days of the town before individually owned land was fenced, there was a need in every community for an area where an animal that was found roaming at large might be impounded until such time as the owner could be found. The first keeper of the pound was elected at the annual town meeting on March 14, 1763. After 1837, the position was one of appointment. The duties of the pound keeper were not only to capture the culprit but to feed and water it until the owner could be found. An assessment was charged the owner to cover the above expenses. These stray animals were advertised in the local paper and listed with the Town Clerk.

An old deed of May 6, 1793 states that for three pounds "a certain piece of land adjoining a publick road from Barre Meeting House to Brookfield was granted and sold for the purpose of erecting a pound for the benefit of said inhabitants for aforesaid purpose." In 1794 another deed in that area transferred land "except a piece of ground given or sold to the Town of Barre for a pound." In 1794 an order was issued for the building of a Town Pound at a sum of slightly over twelve pounds. That pound was situated on South Street near the junction of the street "behind the town scales."

The pound remained there until 1816 when it was voted to give permission to a Mr. Robinson "to remove the Town Pound at his own expense. It was also voted to have Nathaniel Jones, Esq. acquire deed to pound, where it shall set and give a deed of site where it now stands."

Apparently the new pound had been in use at the time of the above article, and the owner of the Naquag could then adopt the old pound site for his use. That earliest plot of land that was the pound is now part of the St. Joseph's Church property.

In March 1936, the citizenry voted to have "Selectmen be authorized to deed to the George W. Cook Estate a parcel of land known as the 'Pound' on South Street, same to become part of Cook's Canyon reserving right to use said pound as may meet the legal need and requirements of the town." According to the local paper, Mrs. George Cook was reno-

vating the pound by replacing missing capstones and in some instances the walls were rebuilt. The walls were four feet wide at the base and tapered to three feet wide at the top. The pound was about twenty eight by thirty feet, and the walls averaged about five feet in height. A pound required high walls for it was erected to impound an animal and keep him confined.

Damage to a pound could result in a fifty dollar fine or three months imprisonment.

The pound fronted South Street. The level of South Street has since been changed. The gate is missing or lost. One would find it an exceedingly difficult feat to lead a large equine or bovine into the pound for containment today.

BURIAL YARDS AND MARKERS

Over the past years, the searching for one's ancestors seems to have grown in popularity and become a favorite pastime for many people. Television, books, and periodicals have all focused on the subject of one's roots and have made an individual more conscious of his own background.

One of the spots that plays an important role in the search of roots is the "country churchyard." The churchyard was usually close to the meeting house. Barre is a bit of an exception for the town's first public burial yard was situated over a half mile northwesterly of the meeting house square. In 1761 the settlers of the Northwest District of Rutland requested of the Proprietors some "unappropriated land for district use that there may be need of some land for a burying place." Two years later, in 1763, Noah Sparhawk deeded to "Joshua Osgood and other heads of families, land for a publick burial place for use of the inhabitants north and west of the Meeting House and for no other use" for one pound, ten shillings, and "that ye people shall and may from ye date hereon and forever after lawfully and quietly enjoy the use of same for above mentioned purposes."

Noah Sparhawk owned considerable land and had married, in 1755, Abigail Frink, the daughter of the first settled minister. Rev. Thomas Frink was bodily removed from the church some years later and dismissed from the parish. The situation was a most unpleasant one and caused several factions among the parish, even causing litigation to finally settle the matter. Frink, in his anger, retaliated by removing from the church all the early records which have never been recovered. Isabel Frink, wife of the dismissed minister and the mother of Abigail Sparhawk, was the youngest daughter of Samuel Wright, Esq. of Rutland. She died in 1772 at the age of 63 years and was interred in one of the front lots of Lincoln Yard, originally part of her son-in-law's farm.

Rev. Frink, her husband, was interred in the Rutland Center burial yard at the time of his death in 1777 in his 73rd year.

As one wanders through the Lincoln Yard, which was so named because of the Lincoln property which abutted it in the early 1800s, one notes early settling families' names on the many headstones: Allen, Bullard, Bassett, Eaton, Carruth, Rice, Sparhawk, Osgood, Gates, and Winslow. These names are but a few of the many names that played such an important role in the growth of the town. An additional plot for the burial yard was purchased from John Weston and added onto the north side of the yard in 1837.

Julie Sherman, in her book, *The Old Road Through Pirate Valley*, began her story at the yard and recounted her story as she traveled westward along Old Stage Road toward Petersham.

Of interest is a headstone at the rear of the cemetery. On close inspection, one reads, "Mary Garland, died April 22, 1843 ae 52, Native of Ireland, County of Mannerhan, Town of Killarney - Erected, by her daughter M.M." Matthew Walker wrote that the first Roman Catholic Mass was said in the home of Widow Mary Garland in 1838. She resided in the old Gates House on Hubbardston Road. Since there was no Catholic burial yard in the town, she was buried at the rear of the "church yard" and according to Barre Vital Records was listed as "Irish."

Barre has over eighteen burial yards which are now public burial spots. Two burial yards are privately owned and operated under corporate management: Glen Valley Cemetery and St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Prior to 1789, individual remains were borne to their final resting place on a bier carried on the shoulders of husky bearers. In that same year, the town voted "to procure a carriage to carry the corpse from any distressed house to the burial ground." A carriage or hearse was described in Town Records "as a style similar to Princeton, with broad cloth curtains, silver fringe and tassells." The town paid for storage and maintenance of the hearse. Stabled near the hearse house was a horse which could be made available to carry the remains to their proper resting place. Mr. Jennison Low resided on the south end of the common in the old Reeby House. Low was responsible for the care of the horse and the hearse. Reports were that the "hearse horse" was allowed to graze at will on the common.

As was the custom in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the cabinet maker or casket maker was also the undertaker who provided the casket, supplied mourning clothes, and official mourners. In several of the Houghton Ledgers, one finds records of several of these funeral reports.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, nearly every district or settlement had its own grass-covered, stone-walled enclosure nearby the settlement which contained the remains of families of the district.

The various epidemics of spotted fever or smallpox in the late 1700s

and early 1800s called attention to the need for a quick burial. Those who died of a contagious disease could be interred hastily.

In November 1796, the citizens of Barre voted "to license the house of Mr. William Caldwell for the purpose of inoculation of the small pox for a term of one year, his paying to the Treasury of the town, the sum of \$100.00 at the expiration of said term." The following year, the town requested general inoculation and a committee was chosen to "take care of all houses that have smallpox in them and to treat with William Caldwell's hospittle." Matthew Walker wrote that John Black, a selectman at that time, was assisting a victim, contracted the disease, and died. Black was buried in a small plot at the rear of his barn on his farm, which was the old Chapman property. During renovations and rebuilding about the last of the 1800s, the markers disappeared. Another headstone denoting the same event exists in Kendall Plain Cemetery (opposite Felton Field) which reads, "Erected in Memory of Capt. John Black. He died of the small pox January 9, 1797 in the 60th yr. of his age."

Old timers reported that he had been buried behind his farm buildings. A member of the family erected a commemorative stone many years later.

Many were felled by disease or accident and no trace or records exist of their final resting place. However, there were several recorded in the Cemetery Commissioner's Report of 1908.

On land of James Culver on Grogan Road were the graves of members of the J.F. Butters family and Black family, all of whom died of smallpox. Mr. Culver, while bulldozing an area behind his present residence in 1965, noticed what appeared to be old grave markers in the foundation of the old barn. They are in the old cellar hole now blanketed by a lush cover of clover and timothy.

Over the town line in Petersham on the old Petersham-Hubbardston Turnpike, is the small Randall Plot. Far removed from the rest of the headstones in the burial yard is one that reads, "Here lies Mr. William Walker who died with the small pox February 21, 1777 in the 60th year of his age." Walker of Nichewaug (now Petersham) had married Martha Rice of New Rutland (now Barre) in Nichewaug in 1754.

Originally a family plot was that of District #2 or the Caldwell Yard situated on Fruitland Road about two miles from Barre Center. This yard is reputed to be the oldest burial plot in town and was part of the Caldwell land holdings in the mid and late 1700s. The earliest recorded burial is that of "Anna Forbes, ae 23, wife of Wm. Forbes, - died 1746." According to Edwin Woods, another of Barre's historians in the late 1800s, Anna was a Caldwell girl. Here also were buried Sarah and William Caldwell. They were progenitors of the numerous Barre Caldwells, who came to Worcester from Northern Ireland in the early 1700s and from Worcester came to the Northwest Quarter of Rutland. A

descendant of theirs, John Caldwell, Esq., deeded this burial yard to the town in 1792. Edwin Woods, in his booklet on the "Caldwell Burying Ground," wrote that "early in the eighteenth century the first settlers came to that tract known as Naquag. Several years later families removed to the North West Quarter later called Rutland District and even later known as Barre." There are believed to be over one hundred burials there in less than half an acre, but many graves are unmarked. Sixty-nine stones were unearthed, repaired, cleaned, and deciphered in the 1920s. Twenty-five bear records which do not appear in any published Vital Records. Twenty-two others differ from so-called records. Only twenty-two agree with record books.

According to Woods, this yard was abandoned due to excessively wet ground. The Kendall Plain Yard succeeded it due to better soil and easier accessibility.

On South Street nearly a mile from the Common is the Buckminster or South Burial Yard, so designated in the Cemetery Commissioners Report of 1909. An old deed of 1765 referred to a bound as "beginning at William Galloway's northerly line near the Burying Place." From this we note that burials must have occurred there prior to that date to have been referred to as the "burying place."

At a Town Meeting in March 1784 it was voted to "choose a committee to procure title to the Burying Ground near Rev. Josiah Dana's house." Twelve years later in 1796 John Caldwell deeded to the town an "acre of land adjoining Parson Dana's dooryard." Rev. Josiah Dana, the second minister, had lost his first wife, Mercy, and married secondly, in 1788, Widow Sally Caldwell. His residence burned and was rebuilt in the latter 1700s where Mrs. George Work lived and is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Gross.

This yard contains numerous old slate stones showing the work of some famous stone carvers. Harriett Merrifield Forbes' book, *Gravestones of Early New England*, reported that "Coomer Soule and his wife are both buried in Barre under typical Soule stones." Both are interred in the South Yard. The yard receives its name from Colonel William Buckminster, who came from Framingham to Barre at the age of 21. He was a large land owner in Barre and was an active and influential leader in the town. He raised and commanded a company during the Revolutionary years, was wounded in battle, and retired from active service. He was instrumental in the incorporation of the town in 1774. On his monument in this cemetery, which bears his name, is the inscription "Sacred to the Memory of Col. William Buckminster, an industrious farmer, a useful citizen, an honest man, a sincere Christian, a brave officer, and a friend to his country, in whose cause he courageously fought and was dangerously wounded at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He was born Dec. 15, 1736, Died June 22, 1786."

Also interred in the same yard is Nathaniel Jennison, Sr., who died in Barre in 1769 at the age of 60. His wife, Abigail, rests in the Adams Cemetery in Barre Plains. Jennison was a large land holder, owned



*Henry Lee Monument, Buckminster Yard,
Wauwinet Rd., Barre*

much of the land in and around the present Quabbin Regional High School property, and was the father of Nathaniel Jennison, Jr., who figured prominently in the Barre Slave Case in 1783. Several grave markers in this yard have disappeared over the years due to weather, falling trees, and neglect.

Not far from the Buckminster Yard is the Lee Cemetery or District #15 Yard on Wauwinet Road. Much of this territory was known as the

Lee Quarter where the sons of Henry Lee, the surveyor for the Proprietors, drew their lots and settled. A parcel of the Lee farm was deeded "to the Proprietors for the Burying Ground" and contained "one hundred rods" with Lot #1 reserved for the donors, heirs and assigns by Samuel and David Lee in 1832. The remaining lots were "to be appropriated for the use of the public." Although the deed was drawn up at an earlier date, it was not recorded until 1852. Near the front center is a tall shaft of the Lee Monument on which are recorded the deeds and exploits of General Samuel Lee, who joined the Army at the age of 13, participated in many campaigns, and was discharged in 1783. He later became a school teacher, served in the Legislature, and was active in local affairs. Also recorded on the same monument is the death of his son, Charles Lee, merchant and prosperous landholder of Barre, who drowned in the sinking of the steamer Lexington on January 13, 1840, in New York. Nearby are the headstones of the William Fiske Ainsworth family members. Ainsworth was a cartographer and designer of the 1835 Map of Barre. He was also a shoe manufacturer, a hat manufacturer, and a noted limner. Several of his works are part of the collection at Old Sturbridge Village.

Near the lower end of South Street in Barre Plains is the Adams Cemetery which was originally part of the farm where the Adams family resided for many generations. It was a private yard, which was owned and maintained by an association until after the death of Austin Flint Adams. The town accepted the land and funds of the association in 1950. It then became a town burial yard which was cared for and administered by the Cemetery Commissioners. The earliest date on a headstone is that of Abigail Smith, 5 May 1766.

Even though her husband was buried farther north on South Street, Abigail Mead Jennison, mother of Nathaniel Jennison, Jr., is buried in the Adams Yard. She died in 1801 at the age of 89.

Of interest is an article written by Austin Adams in which he wrote that at the rear of the Adams Yard was the stone of Katy, a mulatto girl, who married Nimrod Reed and had lived near the junction of Root Road and Old Coach Road. Two of Katy's sons, Prince Orison and Isaac, were buried nearby.

Headstones bearing the name of Stetson, Holbrook, Fay, Nye, Robinson, Winslow, Woodbury, and Wadsworth are just some of the familiar names in the early history of the "Plain."

On a small hillock at the rear of the former Ethier Market, now the Village Market, is a small fenced enclosure about sixty feet square and containing about one quarter of an acre. Known as the Pratt, #12, or High Plains Yard, this, too, was a family burial yard for the Pratt family. It was accepted by the town on April 22, 1829 with a stipulation that it was to be fenced. Nearby at the center of the small yard is the Seth Pratt

marker which is a 5' x 6' marble slab set on four posts like a table top. Pratt came to Barre Plains from Shrewsbury about 1805 and acquired a large acreage along the Ware River. By means of canals, he diverted water from the Ware River to a pond where Rich's Pond is now located. By means of the water power from his power sources, he constructed and operated a saw and grist mills at the Plain. His daughter, Alice, married Phineas Heywood, also of Shrewsbury, who was an able inventor and mechanic and established a clothier mill farther up stream. Another daughter, Relief, married Moses Felton of New Braintree, who operated Felton's Tavern at the Plain and later a hotel keeper at the center. The Pratt Yard, deeded to the town in 1829 by Captain Seth Pratt, contains the remains of himself and other members of his family. There are about a dozen inscriptions in all.

In the western section of the town, situated on Cleveland or Sheldon Road, is the District #7 or Jenkins Burial Ground, about 100' x 120' in size. In this section of town, Nathaniel Jennison Sr. had obtained a large land acreage from the original proprietors. Benjamin and Mehitabel Blush Jenkins moved to Barre about 1750 and later divided their large farm for their three sons, Benjamin, Southworth, and Timothy. It was Abraham, son of Southworth and grandson of Benjamin, who deeded the yard to the town as a public burial yard in 1808. Besides the Jenkins's headstones, the yard bears such names as Ayres, Cole, Forbes, Howland, Hinkley, Mann, King, Perry, Smith, and Shattuck.

Near the present Barre Sportsman's Club on Spring Hill Road is the District #10 or Hathaway Cemetery, deeded to the town in 1842 as "a piece of land to be used as a burying ground." Originally, it was a private yard for the Joel Hathaway family and neighbors. Joel and wife, Sally Trafton Hathaway, came to Barre from Berkley, Massachusetts and raised their ten children in the area. Joel was a soldier of the Revolution, enlisted five times, and was one of seven brothers who served under George Washington. Farmer, stone mason, patriot, and patriarch of the Hathaway clan, Joel saw his family marry and settle in the area. Joel, in his old age, applied for a pension which was at first denied due to "lack of proof." It was not until 1853, seventy two years after completion of Joel's war service, nineteen years after his application, and fifteen years after his death, that Joel's claim was allowed, and a pension was paid to his estate. Joel and Sally Hathaway's markers are near the center of the yard. Joel's marker bears an official bronze marker of the Revolutionary War service.

On Silver Brook Road, a crossroad between Dana and Old Dana Roads, is a small family yard enclosed with a four foot high stone wall with hitching posts at its gate. The yard is named from the donor of the \$500 fund left by Jane King (1829-1890) for the maintenance of this small plot where she, her sister, her father and mother, Samuel and Sophia

(Clark) King, plus William F. Kellogg, are all buried. A large pine tree watches over a most serene setting containing the seven headstones.

On the north side of town, at the junction of Skelly Lane and a little town-owned lane leading to it (much of which is now impassable except to the foot traveler), is what was once a small walled enclosure deeded to the town in 1859 by Joseph Bassett, who was a member of an early family of that neighborhood. There is no record of actual burials there, but the old deed implied its use by its description of "a certain parcel at the westerly and of the Snow lot, on the south side of a town road set apart by me as a Burial Ground." In 1976 a logging company lumbering in the area cut down about eight large trees within the stoned yard and destroyed the walls in the process. An effort was made by the local selectmen to correct the desecration of the property, but to date it has not been corrected. This is known by local hunters and horseback riders as "Red Gate" corner.

Continuing northward off the old Hubbardston-Petersham Turnpike, today referred to as Old Petersham Road, near Barre Four Corners is the District #9 Cemetery. The yard contains the remains of the old settling families of the north section of Barre: Parker, Smith, Holland, Gates, Rice, Partridge, Hemenway, and many others. The stones bearing the earliest dates are those of "Dolly Fisk, wife of Samuel, died 1790 ae 33 yrs" and "Joseph Newton, ae 66, died 8 March 1795." On the stone is lettered near its base, "engraved by Samuel Kilburn of Sterling."

This yard, along with Glen Valley Cemetery, contains some of the Williams family members who were disinterred in the 1930s from the small walled Williams Plot near the Barre-Hubbardston line.

This four corners was once a busily traveled artery and in 1786 played an important role in the Shays' Rebellion. It was at Smith's Tavern that many of Shays' men were housed and planned their siege on the Court House in Worcester, where Capt. Moses Smith challenged the authority of Judge Artemas Ward. Smith, a prominent participant of that skirmish, operated his hostelry where the present Sirois house is and afterward was buried in the #9 yard along with wife, Lydia, relatives, and neighbors.

Nearby, on the old Phillipston Road, is a small walled family plot of some of the Hemenway Family: Daniel Hemenway, his wife, Persis, and their two sons, Joseph and D. Lambert Hemenway; plus three Hollands: Sewell, his wife, Nancy Adams Holland, and their daughter, Harriet B. Holland. Another stone in the #9 Cemetery also duplicates the listing of these same Holland family members.

Reached by a foot path from the top of Harwood Crossing Hill, about a half to three quarters of a mile north from Route 62, is the Prince Walker Burial Plot. It was deeded to the town in 1855 by Prince Walker. Since the property was not free and clear at the time of the bequest, it

was not until 1948 that the MDC Commissioners, through the effort of the Barre selectmen, gave a clear title and the deed was recorded. Prince Walker was born in Barre in 1774, the son or brother of Quacko or Quork Walker. He was reputed to have been taken to Connecticut but later returned to acquire a small six and one-half acre farm where he raised his family, did odd jobs, and was a well respected laborer. According to Barre Vital Records, Prince married twice. His first wife who was known as Betsey Dawes Walker died in 1809 at 23 years. Prince married secondly Anna Morse in 1816. Four of his children's deaths were recorded in the Vital Records.

In 1908 the Cemetery Commissioner's Report listed "six markers - only five now discernible." In 1940 Walter Clark, in his book *Quabbin Reservoir*, listed "five graves that lie half a circle, against a stone wall and the small plot faced the old cellar hole with a small stream dividing the two hillocks." The only marker legible today is a white granite headstone, now broken, which reads "Prince Walker, died 21 April 1858 ae 84 yrs." Nearby can be seen the unmarked common field stone markers of other members of the family. No records exist of the actual number of burials in the plot. It is one of the town owned burial plots that is not receiving care and at the last viewing of the plot by the writer, a large tree had fallen across the path obstructing travel on the path and trespassers were now clambering and driving over the "hallowed spot" itself.

Not far distant, but located on Farrington or Williams Road, is the Francis Rice or District #4 Yard. Here old Barre families are represented by numerous markers that bear the name of Wheelock, Rice, Brigham, and other neighbors of the district. In #4 Yard is interred "Brother Nell Wheelock," a farm boy from Barre, the son of Horatio and Martha Wheelock, who joined the Union Army and who died on July 4, 1863 of wounds received in battle. The *Barre Gazette* in 1961 printed a series of articles on the "Saga of Brother Nell" who, at the time of his death, was only twenty five and a member of the famous 15th Regt., Massachusetts Volunteers.

The headstone bearing the earliest date is that of "Catherine Wheelock, wife of Moses B. Wheelock, died March 1817 ae 74 yrs" and the grandmother of "Brother Nell" Wheelock.

In 1864 the town authorized and permitted "burials to take place in the enlargement of the burial yard near Francis Rice's." Again in 1954, the town accepted a gift of land adjacent to the #4 yard from Alfred and Ivy Cummings for the purpose of enlargement. A new wall has been constructed around the new addition making #4 Yard one of the neatest and best maintained yards in town.

Running southerly on a dirt road off Route 62 at Harwood's Crossing and traveling almost parallel to the Burnshirt River, crisscrossing the old railroad bed, one finds himself at the old Caldwell or, later,

Granger Farm which is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Mitchell. Opposite the driveway to the house is an old road known to old timers as the Covered Bridge Road, now dead end. No longer is there any bridge over the Ware River for it was washed away in the flood of 1938. Westerly of the site of the old covered bridge and the river is the old Harwood or Riverside Cemetery, originally part of the Harwood Farm. It was first used about 1800 and reputed to have been "one of the finest in town and under the management and ownership of the Trustees." New iron gates were installed in 1875 and "handsome wooden arches made by Howe & Gleason of Hubbardston placed over the gates." An addition of three quarters of an acre of land was acquired in June 1880.

Jacob Riis, who was a philanthropist, writer, newspaperman, social reformer, and born in Denmark, referred to Riverside as "God's Acre." He could view it from his farm home nearby on the Hubbardston Road. Riis had resided on his farm for only a few years. It was 1914 when he returned to Barre from a lecture tour where he was taken ill, that he died. His grave is designated by a stone from his own farm which is a large unmarked field stone. A marker outside the yard denoting the Riis burial site was erected by the local historical commission in 1974.

Nearer the river, within the cemetery bounds but outside the usual burial area, is an indentation now nearly erased from view except to those who are familiar with the tragic story of the Naramores. In March 1902 a distraught mother in extreme poverty took the lives of her six children, who ranged in age from eleven months to twelve years. They lived within the Barre town limits in the village of Coldbrook. The local paper gave full coverage at the time of the dire tragedy.

Overlooking the Barre Falls Flood Control Dam is a small 92' x 102' stone walled enclosure known as District #17, Parker or Barnes Cemetery. Like so many other burial yards in town, it, too, was a family burial plot. According to the inscriptions on the stones, they were devoted mainly to David and Betsey Eager Parker and their family. The 1908 Cemetery Commissioner's Report stated that the Parker Yard contained about one-half acre. No deed is known to exist. The report also stated that first interments were made in the early 1800s, and over one hundred graves were believed to be there with only a few marked. According to the 1915 listing of the cemeteries, the following family names were recorded: Clark, Holbrook, Howe, Knight, Parker, and Varney. The yard is now within the bounds of the MDC watershed and abuts the property under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

In 1908 the Coldbrook Cemetery Association was formed for the care and maintenance of the cemetery. Coldbrook Village was a settlement in two parts. The section east of the Ware River was largely in the town of Oakham, whereas the portion of the village north and west of the river was largely in the town of Barre. In 1911, the selectmen grant-

ed the Association a permit to add a small tract of land to the cemetery.

In 1849 John Smith, owner and operator of the cotton mills in Smithville, bought of Hiram Harwood for sixteen dollars a half acre of land on the southerly side of the old country road leading from Barre to Worcester, "for the express purpose of, and to be used for a burial ground and for no other purpose," and "it is further agreed that said Smith is to fence said land on all sides." The above deed was recorded in 1859. The Rev. George W. Cates, Pastor of the Baptist Church in Coldbrook, died and was one of the first interments in the new yard.

John Smith was reported to have bought the yard for use of the Baptist Society at Coldbrook. After Smithville was sold to the White Manufacturing Company, the cemetery maintenance slipped, and the yard became sadly overgrown. Steps were taken to form a Cemetery Association. A bill was presented to the legislature which was passed in March 1909 for that purpose. The Association used its meager funds for the restoration of the cemetery. Due to the dwindling population in the Coldbrook area, the association offered the land and a small amount of funds to the town. The town accepted the land and funds of the Coldbrook Cemetery Association in 1962. The yard is now fenced and maintained by the town.

On the flat opposite Felton Field on Old Coldbrook Road is another district yard known as Kendall Plain Cemetery. It was purchased as an extension of the old Caldwell or #2 Yard. The soil was better drained, and the yard more accessible at all times of the year. Originally the land was part of the old Samuel Kendall farm. The earliest markers are a slate stone inscribed "Caleb Nurse, died 28 Sept. 1816" and a memorial marker erected to "Capt. John Black." Many of the family names are the same as in the Old Caldwell Yard on Fruitland Road with more neighbors' names added.

One also finds in this yard the Marker of Capt. Silas Bemis, born in Spencer who built the powder mills early in the nineteenth century on the Ware River just below the present Powder Mill Pond. At least eight members of the Bemis family are interred in this plot. Another marker relating to the Powder Mill is that of "George W. Nurse who was instantly killed by the explosion at the Barre Powder Manufacturing Company, April 22, 1847, ae 26." In the 1908 Cemetery Commissioners Report it stated "it is well fenced and received respectable care by private parties for many years."

On the river side of Nichols Road is a small yard of which the ownership is listed as Town of Barre. Three granite boundary markers are clearly visible today which mark the boundary of this 7,200 square foot, 160 x 45 rectangular burial plot of several of the Mullett family. Signs of many burials are evident, but whether or not any headstones are in the small plot is unknown today for they would be covered with years accu-

mulation of leaves and brush. According to the Cemetery Commissioner's Report of 1909, "several members of the John Mullett family are buried there." Rumor reported that several Powder Mill casualties were interred there also.

In 1864 an association was formed to acquire land for a new burial yard. Much space was given to the subject by the *Barre Gazette* at that time. Thirty acres of land east of Valley Road were acquired from Messrs. Dennis, Fay, and Bacon. Plans for the new Glen Valley Cemetery were drawn and designed by Amasa Farrier of Stoneham. The new cemetery was dedicated on October 10, 1865, and Dr. George Brown was the main speaker of the day. After the dedication, "lots will be bid for public sale." The *Barre Gazette* reported that the first grave was to contain the remains of Amasa Gibson, who had died just prior to the dedication. The sudden death of another active member of the association which occurred two hours before the dedicatory services was that of John T. Ellsworth.

In 1868 a lot in Glen Valley was purchased by the Town of Barre for "burial of strangers and paupers" for \$200. In various town reports moneys were allocated for the care and maintenance of the "town lot." Also in 1868 was the "freshet" which caused so much damage along the Prince River. Glen Valley also felt the sting of the flood by losing the fence in front of the yard and by heavy deposits of sand and gravel washed by the flood waters.

In 1883 a parcel of four acres and sixty two rods was purchased from George Brown and added on the easterly side of Glen Valley Cemetery. Today Glen Valley is one of the two privately owned cemeteries and is maintained by the Trustees of the Association who meet annually.

The other privately owned cemetery is St. Joseph's Cemetery which is located on South Barre Road near the junction of Routes 122 and 32. It is the only Catholic burial yard within the town limits and serves both Catholic parishes as well as the mission of Wheelwright. The first parcel of this yard was acquired in 1859 from John Murray by the Bishop of the Boston Diocese, John Fitzpatrick. The second parcel was purchased from Jason Desper in 1881 by Bishop O'Reilly, Bishop of the Springfield Diocese. In 1947 a third parcel was acquired by Bishop O'Leary from Maria Poleo, Massaro and Anna Poleo. These parcels constitute the present cemetery which is in the name of the Bishop of the Worcester Diocese but supervised and maintained by the pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Barre. Another parcel has recently been added.

In the Cemetery Commissioners Report of 1908, it stated that "both of these cemeteries are under corporate management and the Town Cemetery Commissioners have little to do with them except for approval of accounts where care has been provided for by funds in the town trea-

surey for specified lots.”

Besides the burial yards already mentioned, there are several private burial plots scattered throughout the town. Several of the private plots have nearly disappeared from sight. Since they are not town property, they have been sadly abandoned and neglected.

According to Matthew Walker, Barre's historian of the late 1800s and early 1900s, an old burial site was the Felton Site which was located off the Barre Station Road near the site of the present landfill. Walker wrote that the railroad forced a change in the location of the Worcester Road to the north side of the river, so the old site was abandoned. He wrote that many of the bodies were removed to other yards but several remained. No markers nor visible signs were evident about 1900.

Another old family plot, now no longer easily found, is that of the White Family. It is located off a crossroad, White Cemetery Road (Cole Road), in District #7 on the original White property. This burial plot is located in a corner of the farm near the junction of two walls. In 1962 Al Clark scraped back the brush and leaves and found three gravestones flat on the ground. Only two of the stones could be deciphered. The inscription read: “Noah White, d. 1824 Joel, son of Noah & Nynna White - d. 1820.” The plot was shown on the old 1835 map as a burial site. Of interest is the fact that similar stones are in the Adams Yard in Barre Plains. As often was the case, names were added to the family stone in memory of other members of the family who might have been buried elsewhere.

Matthew Walker also wrote that two stones marked with the name “Ruggles” were located at the rear of the Naquag property. At one time that property was part of the old, Ruggles-owned Mansion House, later known as the Naquag Hotel. After the barn was razed by Mrs. Alexander Martin, a former owner, the property was landscaped, and the headstones were no longer visible.

Probably one of the most interesting old burial plots is located on an old road which ran between the Old Hardwick Road and Hardwick or Wauwinet Road. The Lee Tomb is situated in a pasture which was originally part of the Lee Quarter, a name given to that section of town which was settled by members of the Lee family. Ezekiel Lee was the fourth generation of that family to reside in America, but the first generation to permanently reside in the town. Ezekiel was born in 1730. He was the third son of Henry Lee and Catherine Peyton, his second wife. Catherine had been a widow with one daughter also named Catherine who later married Jeremiah Williams. It was Henry Lee who was the surveyor and associated himself with Simon Willard, one of the original Proprietors of this area. Henry Lee, assisted by his son, Abner, in the 1730s, surveyed and mapped the tract of land known as the Rutland District, now Barre. Ezekiel, son of Henry, married Martha Haven of

Framingham in 1773. They lived in the west part of the town on the farm where the tomb is located, now the property of the Kukas family. Ezekiel died in November 1804 at the age of seventy four and left his farm to his natural heir, Ezekiel Lee Williams. In 1907 a sum of \$200 was voted by the town to care for the many burial spots in town mentioned in the Cemetery Commissioners Report of that year. Austin F. Adams and Samuel Smith reported as follows:

“We find on land of Alfred Johnson, formerly the Ezekiel Williams farm, a very substantially built tomb, except that the doorway has fallen in so that human bones are in view and we would suggest that some arrangement be made to have these remains buried within the tomb or have the tomb substantially closed. We also noticed a slate and marble headstone. One stone bore the name of Ezekiel Lee and the other Allan Grey who died in 1812. These and other circumstances seem to indicate that a century ago there were probably other interments there.”

As a result of the report the town paid for the inscription on the huge stone slab that now seals the tomb. The inscription reads “EZEKIEL LEE TOMB - CONTAINING REMAINS OF UNKNOWN PERSONS - CLOSED BY THE TOWN OF BARRE IN 1911.”

A headstone or a commemorative marker is situated in a heavily wooded area of the MDC east of the old Caldwell or Granger farm. Matthew Walker wrote that, “a stone monument in the field east of the house on the old Fowler place marks the spot and attests the death of James Caldwell who met his death by a falling limb of a tree under which he had taken shelter during a thunderstorm and a negro slave by his side had his thigh broken at the same time.” A stone monument a little east of the house marks the spot and tells the story as:

“This stone
Is Erected in Memory
Of the Time When and Place
Wher Mr. James Caldwell
Died, which happened by the
Falling of a Tree, July 18, 1763
In the 52 yr. of his Age.”

This was the James Caldwell whose widow, Isobel, married Nathaniel Jennison, Jr., in 1769. After her death, Jennison inherited her estate including Quork Walker. Both Walker and Jennison were prominent figures in the Slave Case of 1783. The stone is still visible even

though the inscription is difficult to decipher.

Two burial yards containing remains of many Barre persons are the Harty Cemetery in Hubbardston and the Randall Yard in Petersham. The Randall Yard is situated on the old Hubbardston-Petersham Turnpike, about one quarter of a mile east of Narrow Lane. Eliza Randall Rice, daughter of Samuel and Jane Randall was married as a second wife to Benjamin Rice, a neighbor just over the Barre line. Harriett Randall married Elbridge Williams. Emily Randall married Hiram Marsh. Both Williams and Marsh were from Barre. Many of their family members were interred there.

The Harty Cemetery, within the boundaries of Hubbardston, is located on Old Phillipston Road. It is so named because of the 1911 "new Harty Monument" in the center of the old stone walled enclosed yard. It is the final resting place of many early Irish family members. This was the yard used prior to the establishment of St. Joseph's Cemetery when Barre was a mission of Otter River. Many of the markers are plain field-stone with no inscription legible. Others bear the family names of Leamy, McCormack, Glasheen, and Harty. There is no telling how many other are buried beneath the unmarked mounds.

There were reports of remains in sitting position by workmen when construction of Route 122 was in progress in the Rockingstone area in the 1930s. Also, the *Barre Gazette* reported at the time that several Indian artifacts were unearthed at the same location.

A marker in the north part of town west of the Old Petersham Road is that of Porter Hemenway, the youngest son of Amos and Rachel Hemenway, who was "instantly killed here by a limb of a falling tree on 30 March 1837." As in several other cases, another stone with nearly the same story is in #9 Cemetery at Barre Four Corners where other members of the Hemenway family are buried.

Although not actually in Barre, there is a monument that was erected on the west bank of the Ware River some distance between the former paper mill site in Wheelwright and Barre Plains. The monument is in memory of Thomas Harmon, a surveyor, who was born in Ireland and came to New England about 1707. He first settled in Rutland and then Oakham. He married Anna Damond of Leicester in 1744. Two children were recorded to them: Thomas, who settled in Western, now Warren, and Margaret, who married Thomas Barrows and resided on the old Whitney farm in Barre Plains. Barrows ran a saw and grist mill on upper Pratt Brook in the early 1800s. While attempting to cross the Ware River, Harmon drowned, and a stone was erected with the inscription "Memento Mori - In Memory of Thomas Harmon who drowned 22 June 1774 attempting to wade this river, about 60 rods above this place and taken out of the river at this place. Aged 68 yrs."

Two unusual circumstances relative to headstones brought forth sto-

ries of interest regarding two Barre families during the past few years.

In the spring of 1978, a gentleman from Leominster informed members of the Historical Society that an old house had been razed there and a topping stone on the chimney was noticed to be a partially broken granite headstone with the name still discernible. In the February 8, 1978 issue of the *Leominster Review*, it was reported that two different gravestone had topped the chimneys of the old house at the corner of West and Boutell Streets in Leominster. The inscription on one of the stones was:

“William D. Rider, Died for his Country.
June 28, 1862 Aged 26 yrs 9 mo 12 da.
Member Co. K - 21st Regt of Mass. Vols.”

William Dexter Rider was born in Barre on 18 May 1835 the son of William and Elvira Rice Rider. According to the *Barre Gazette*, “Corporal Wm. Rider died of consumption on 28 June 1862 at the home of his father.” The funeral took place on 30 June 1862. The account even mentioned that a band played at the service. The article did not state the place of burial, although the Town Clerk’s Records state that he was buried in Barre. However, other members of his family including his mother, father, stepmother, two brothers and a half-brother were all interred in the Lincoln Cemetery on Pleasant Street. The William D. Rider stone was brought to the Barre Historical Society in two sections. The mystery still remains as to where the stone was meant to be and how and why it got to Leominster to grace the top of a chimney for several years.

The other headstone story is that of “Joel Holden, son of Benjamin and Abigail Holden, died 1 May 1772 ae 15 months.” This slate stone with the death’s angel carving was found in relatively good condition in a plastered wall in one of the old houses on Common Street. It was found over two hundred years after Baby Joel’s death. The stone had been used to patch a wall. It was not until the patch was removed that the story began to unfold. Baby Joel’s name does not appear on any town record but did appear in the Baptismal Records of the First Parish. He was baptized on 28 April 1771. His parents, Benjamin and Abigail Bacon Holden, were married in 1770. After baby Joel’s death in 1772, another Joel Holden was born and recorded in town records in May, ten years later. Six other children were born to Benjamin and Abigail, besides the two Joels. In both town and church records, Benjamin was mentioned as being involved in a scandal which rocked the town and the church for some time. Benjamin Holden was selectman in 1778, a veteran of the Revolution, and a prominent member of the church. The two parties were discussed in the records, and Benjamin was required to make public penance. He was restored to good standing. The other

party remarried and removed from town. Holden died in 1783 at the age of 35 years.

Whether the last two stones ever graced a cemetery is unknown, but it is probable that Joel Holden's stone was once located on part of the farm which later became divisioned off and strangers found no reason to leave it and so they discarded it only to have someone find a use for it as a wall patch.

In a stone wall near the Spooner residence on South Street are numerous carved headstones face down in a wall. Research has found that these stones were discards often used for walls, foundation stones, and walks.

Three commissioners oversee the cemeteries. The town allots substantial money for their care and maintenance.

ROCKINGSTONE PARK

Nearly three miles west of Barre Center, off Route 122, is the "Rockingstone" or "Cradle Rock," which is composed of double boulders. The bottom boulder is resting on a ledge outcrop. Both boulders weigh many tons apiece.

In 1925, George H. Ellis of Newton, owner of a large acreage in Barre and a prosperous agriculturist, "made a gift to the Inhabitants of the Town of Barre of eleven acres including the Rockingstone or Cradle Rock." Nearly two years later in 1927, Joseph H. Higgins, owner of the old Cradle Rock Farm nearby, gave an additional eleven acres. Both parcels were received by "resolution" and a "rising vote of thanks" from the town, and both deeds were recorded. The area then became known as "Rockingstone Park."

In 1931 when the new Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand was erected on the common, the old, pagoda-styled bandstand was removed to Rockingstone Park where one could see it resting on a ledge just off the Route 122 curve. However, over the years, neglect and rigors of weather caused destruction of the bandstand, and no trace of the old bandstand is seen today.

In 1939 about 59,150 square feet of land was taken from the park land along Route 122 by the State Department of Public Works. At the time the state road or Route 122 was reconstructed at "the curve."

Many legends exist of the rocking of the stone. Geologists report that glaciation and the resulting melting deposited several boulders of different composition on top of one another. According to reports, several noted geologists were known to have viewed the natural wonder: Edward Hitchcock, in *Geological History of Massachusetts*, published in 1847, included a sketch of the Barre "balance rock," and Louis Agassiz visited the area as a guest of Austin F. Adams.

In the Souvenir Supplement of the *Barre Gazette*, published in May 1897, it was stated that old timers believed “the area around the rock to have been an Indian burial ground and reported that human remains and Indian artifacts were uncovered in the area on the eastern slope of the hill.”



Cradle Rock, circa 1920, Barre

Brush was cleared away in the early 1970s, and a parking area was constructed with picnic benches and suitable rubbish receptacles placed for the convenience of users of the park. Unfortunately, vandals and time have disposed of most of the wooden benches.

The park land was surveyed in 1974 by the William G. Troy Associates of Tewksbury. The survey stated an acreage of 23.01, as a result of the total acreage of the two gift parcels.

The park is overseen by the Rockingstone Park Commissioners appointed by the Selectmen. One honorary member was Joseph H. Higgins, who was donor of one of the original parcels of land.

FELTON FIELD

To those who can still remember the colorful old Barre Fairs, it will

always be known as the Fair Grounds. To younger generations Felton Field represents tennis courts, horse shows, Little League baseball, and picnic grounds.

Located on the south side of Old Coldbrook Road, it was made from a part of the Jason Desper's farm and a part of the "Gambol Place." It came into existence because of disputes of having a fair on the Town Common, using surrounding streets for a race track, and closing off other streets. The sponsor of the fair, Worcester West Agricultural Society, organized in 1851, purchased the property in 1865. After great expenditures of money and labor, the annual fair was held in the new field in the fall.

Several disasters befell the property while under the ownership of the Agricultural Society: the exhibition hall was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1873; a cyclone destroyed the building in 1889; and in 1908 the grandstand was burned and rebuilt. Numerous dignitaries visited the grounds during the fairs. In 1912 Woodrow Wilson made an appearance at the fairgrounds while campaigning for the Presidency.

The Agricultural Society suffered financial difficulties through the post World War I era. The future of the old fairgrounds was in question until Arthur P. Felton, through the efforts of Clyde Swan, purchased the property for a recreation center and athletic field. He presented the property to the town as a gift in memory to his sister, Carrie Felton Williams. He established a fund with the interest to be used in the care and maintenance of the field. Arthur P. Felton was born in Williamsville on July 18, 1860, one of six children of Nathan Hamilton and Caroline Williams Felton. He was educated in the local schools and in later years went into the paint business and became an able executive of his firm. He lived



Barre Fair Grounds, Felton Field, Barre



Boulder for the marker of Felton Field, Barre 1932



The Grandstand for the Barre Fairgrounds, Barre, 1912

summers for many years in the old Tatman House on the Common.

At a special Town Meeting in July 1931, Felton Field was accepted by the town, and it was dedicated the following September. A huge boulder was hauled to the entrance of the field and a plaque fastened to the stone which read: "Felton Field given to the Town of Barre as an athletic and social center in memory of Carrie Felton Williams by her brother, Arthur P. Felton-1932."

By an act of Legislature in 1934, the field came under the control of a Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners were to be composed of three commissioners who were to be elected, plus the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and the Chairman of the Local School Committee.

At the time of the presentation of Felton Field to the town, it consisted of a half mile track, numerous buildings used for fair activities, and slightly over twenty five acres of land.

Since acceptance of the field by the town, the Commissioners have overseen the construction of a baseball diamond for Little League, tennis courts, horse stables, horse show rings, rest rooms, picnic tables and fireplaces. All of these facilities are for the enjoyment of the townspeople.

In 1974, a Bicentennial Pavilion was constructed with matching funds of the Felton Field Commission and a grant from the Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission. A very attractive, well constructed wooden pavilion with ten sturdy picnic tables has become extremely popular with family groups, organization outings and activities. A few summertime weddings have also been performed in the pavilion.

On May 15, 1980 at about 11:30 p.m., a fire was discovered in the grandstand. It was totally engulfed in flames by the time the fire department could get there. Jumps and show materials of the Barre Riding and Driving Club were also destroyed in the fire. This tragic loss was the work of an arsonist.

COOK'S CANYON

Galloway Brook meanders leisurely through the flats west of the Common, crosses South Street about a quarter of a mile below Kendall Street, and enters Cook's Canyon. As the brook proceeds into the Audubon entrance, where the brook crosses South Street, the descent into the canyon begins. About a tenth of a mile southward on the road parallel to the brook, one passes a small dam on the right that is no longer used. It is another 0.2 miles to the picnic area and the larger dam which holds back a pond. The brook slopes a gentle 30 feet from South Street to the top of the dam. The dam sits on an escarpment that probably was the crest of the original Barre Center Falls. A woodcut of the

falls graced the front page of the first issue of the *Farmer's Gazette* in 1834. The dam is also the start of the canyon. A spring freshet is exciting to behold as the water spills over the dam and cascades down through the canyon. The journey of the brook rushes toward the Prince River about a half a mile away.

A short distance below the dam, the brook passes through a privately owned, conservation-restricted property to the end of the canyon. As the brook drops, it flows between St. Joseph's Cemetery and private, undeveloped land. Following the journey of the brook to the Prince River, it slips under the Valley Road. The total drop from the top of the dam to the Prince River is a steep 200 feet and adds a small element of magnificence to the quiet of the woods.



Cook's Canyon, Galloway Brook, Barre

According to the Town Clerk's records, much of the area in and around South Street in 1765 was owned by William Galloway, who married Margaret Oliver in Petersham in 1753. Little is known about Galloway, but his name lives on with the brook.

For many years the area was mostly pasture land owned by various people. In 1896 George W. Cook, a native of Petersham and a Barre res-

ident for many years, purchased the land surrounding the upper portion of Galloway Brook east of South Street. He had heard that the area was about to be cleared for lumber and found it a propitious time to purchase the acreage abutting the brook. Cook was a County Commissioner for thirty years, a partner with his father-in-law in the insurance firm of Davis & Cook, and an appraiser for the Metropolitan District Commission. He was employed by the MDC during the period of land acquisition in and along the Ware and Swift River Valleys in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Cook acquired the first land tract in 1896 and additional tracts of land in 1906 and 1908. He beautified the area known as Cook's Canyon by planting numerous types of trees, erecting swings and seats, building a dam to form a pond, and constructing a road leading to an open picnic area near the dam. In addition, Cook built a more convenient entrance to the area.

Cook died in 1936. He had the intention of leaving the grove and land tract to the Town of Barre. That year, the George W. Cook Estate was given a "parcel of land known as the 'Pound' on South Street by the Selectmen, the same to become a part of Cook's Canyon Reservation, reserving the right to use said 'Pound' as may meet the legal needs and requirements of the Town." Cook's widow, Mary L. Cook, had other ideas for the property and carried on the maintenance of the reservation until her death in 1948. She bequeathed the three separate parcels which comprised the forty acre tract to the Massachusetts Audubon Society and included a \$40,000 trust fund for the maintenance of the property. The bequest contained not only the canyon tracts, but a fourteen room dwelling built about 1847 by Mrs. Cook's father, James F. Davis. Also included was a barn, a shed, and numerous outbuildings. Later a large dining hall, swimming pool, recreation building, and numerous platform campsites were erected for use of the Audubon Summer Residential Natural History Camp for boys and girls who were nine to fifteen years of age. The camp also played host to counselors from all over New England. For many years each director of the Sanctuary had his office and residence in the main house, the former Cook residence. Past directors and spouses were: Leon and Ginnie McGee, David and Sylvia Miner, and Andy and Debbie Williams. The camp was discontinued in 1978.

A fourth land tract which was known as "Williams' Woods" was added to the Wildwood Nature Sanctuary in 1975 when an eleven acre parcel abutting Summer Street about 1/2 mile southerly of the common was given to the Massachusetts Audubon Society by the heirs of A.G. Williams. This parcel does not connect with the other Audubon holdings.

Thus, Cook's Canyon and Williams' Woods contained about 50 acres of forested land within walking distance of the Barre Common. One can enjoy the babbling of the brook, the roar of the canyon, and the quiet of the woods within a half mile of the Barre Common.

QUABBIN PROJECT

In the 19th century the rivers and streams of Central Massachusetts attracted people in search of power to turn water wheels and later to generate electricity. About the turn of the century, the search turned to seeking pure water for the fast growing metropolitan area of Boston from these same rivers and streams. As early as 1895, rumors were first heard of the waters of the Ware and Swift Rivers becoming additional sources for water supply for the Greater Boston area and ominous shadows were cast over the area.

Little more was heard regarding the idea for many years and a false sense of security prevailed on the residents of the Ware and Swift River Valleys. In 1919, a report by the State Board of Health, the Metropolitan Water and Sewer Board, and the Metropolitan District Commission referring to "construction of a tunnel from Wachusett Reservoir to the Ware River with provisions for a dam at Coldbrook where flood waters would be taken" awakened them to the realization that the idea was still very much alive. Recommendations included "that the commission placed in charge of this construction be given charge of the Swift River project also."

In 1924, the Legislature established a special commission which reported in 1926 and provided plans for the development of the Ware River project with a dam to be constructed in the Coldbrook area. The Legislature pondered over this report and in 1927 gave the act favorable action establishing the "Ware River Act" which included the construction of a tunnel to take flood waters of the Ware River to Wachusett Reservoir. That same year the Swift River Act was adopted extending the tunnel to the Swift River and the construction of a reservoir on that river.

The ideas of the acquisition of the Ware River waters and the taking of the land in the Ware River Valley were not popular with everyone. Reactions were strong by many people in Central Massachusetts which was the area to be hurt the most.

Austin F. Adams, a prominent Barre citizen and highly regarded resident of Barre Plains, expressed his concern about the project in a letter to the editor of the *Barre Gazette*. Mr. Adams had been a member of the Legislature in 1898-99 and again in 1914-15. He wrote of the State Legislature making laws that would "bind a community with chains that they cannot remove or avoid" and that often "pernicious bills are craftily slipped along because their results are not plainly discernible." He referred to the bill in the Legislature at that time "which seriously affects the people of Worcester, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties, which will despoil over fifty miles of the natural and developed resources of the Ware River Valley" and threaten "to sweep away one hundred fifty years of labor and business."

He deplored the power given to the Metropolitan District Commission to furnish water to municipalities at a cheaper rate by sacrificing the central part of the state for the encouragement of pleasure and profit for those within a twenty-five mile radius of Boston. He made note of the fact that most of the political power and voting force happened to be also within the same radius. "It has the appearance of a larger power swallowing a lesser one and by crafty tactics gathered in from what rightfully belongs to the central part of the state and delivered over to another part of the state."

Many others attempted to prevent the inevitable "sacrifice of the few for the many." For those who accepted their fate, the MDC purchased their property and to those who did not wish to be part of the enormous sacrifice, eminent domain proceedings were enforced.

Many local residents resented the fact that they were forbidden by signs to swim in the old "swimming holes." Even an elderly gentleman who lived alone was not allowed to have his vegetable garden for fear it might "pollute" the waters sixty-five miles from Boston. One could pick up the paper in the same week to read where the MDC had opened a municipal swimming pool or had opened the hydrants in the midsummer heat so that the city children could be cool with the waters of Central Massachusetts.

Quabbin Reservoir was constructed "nearly in the central part of Massachusetts, sixty-seven miles from Boston, in the northeasterly part of Hampshire County, the southerly part of Franklin County, and in the westerly part of Worcester County. It is sixteen miles long, has a capacity of 415 billion gallons of water and a surface area of thirty-nine square miles."

The Swift River and tributaries furnish water for the Quabbin Reservoir and are supplemented by flood waters delivered through a tunnel from the Ware River. About 80,000 acres of land in the Swift River Valley were purchased in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by the Metropolitan District Commission. Part of the land was flooded by the reservoir, and the remainder became watershed land. As a result of the project, the towns of Dana, Enfield, Prescott, and Greenwich were totally removed from the map and portions of nine other towns were acquired. According to Walter E. Clark's book, *Quabbin Reservoir*, the field work started on the Swift River Valley in the fall of 1926. Construction on the tunnel began in April 1927. Land was taken and purchased in the Ware River Valley in the late 1920s.

In the early 1920s, the surveyors and engineers of the MDC met with an elderly resident (Helen Connington's grandmother, Margaret McAvoy O'Herron) whose keen mental faculties enabled her to recall residents of the area when her various children were born. She gave suggestions to the researching surveyor as to name and owner of a certain parcel of land at a certain date. A family diary recounts, "January 14, 1925—The surveyors worked around the fields all day and had their

dinner in our living room.” On “December 2, 1926—One of the young engineers came and we walked along the tunnel line looking for ledge.”

The early signs of the project, other than the surveys, were the cutting and clearing of a fifty-foot swath of land over the future tunnel. This swath was to carry the power lines to feed the various construction settlements around each shaft and the operations in and around the shafts and tunnel.

The two sections of the tunnel were built in different phases: the Coldbrook-Wachusett and the Coldbrook-Swift. The construction started at both ends and met at Shaft 8 in Barre. One marveled at the feat of engineering which planned for the tunnel to meet at an exact spot hardly an inch off calculation. The entire tunnel, which is called the Swift-Wachusett Tunnel, is 24.6 miles in length and starts at Shaft 12 which is 125 feet deep at the Quabbin Lake in what was formerly the town of Greenwich. Shaft One is near the shore of Wachusett Reservoir in West Boylston and is two hundred-nine feet deep. The Swift-Wachusett tunnel passes through the towns of Hardwick, Barre, Oakham, Rutland, Holden. Crews were brought to work on the tunnel and construction settlements spread out around each shaft.

Helen Connington recalled going with her uncle to sell her “school candy” to the tunnel workers. Numerous boxes of candy were dispensed to the workers to the advantage of the athletic fund of the local high school.

Disasters were not uncommon. In his diary, Mrs. Connington’s uncle James O’Herron, recorded on March 24, 1928, “Heard that the buildings at Shaft 7 were burning,” and on November 8, 1929, “Heard that there had been five men blown to pieces and two badly hurt in the west heading of Shaft 7.” The diary recounted the progress of the tunnel project in several entries. May 1, 1927, “went up on the hill and saw where they are cutting trees on the tunnel right-of-way.” Again, on October 23, 1927, “Saw them pulling up the pieces of rock in big buckets. They have nearly got to the bottom of the shaft.” August 26, 1928, “Went down the shaft to the west-end where they are drilling. Stayed down fully one hour. A wonderful sight!” March 10, 1931, “Went over to Shaft 7 and saw them bring up the last bucket full of refuse out of the shaft.” March 20, 1931, “Went over to Shaft 7. The work is nearly finished and they are fixing a cap over the shaft.” In the May 5, 1931 entry, “They took down the power lines that ran over the tunnel line.”

Great mounds of earth removed from the shafts and the horseshoe shaped tunnel still surround the old shaft sites. Both Shafts Nine and Eight are in the town of Barre. One can trace on the USGS map of Barre the Quabbin Aqueduct as it passes from the Hardwick-Barre line, under Jewett Road, Chamberlain Hill Road and South Street to Shaft 9, off Loring Road and from there under the Prince River, Clem Court, South Barre Road, Nichols Road, under the Ware River and Route 122, to

Shaft 8 at White Valley, and from there into Oakham, a distance of approximately five miles through the town of Barre.

Shaft 8 is the "portal" at which an automatic siphon was established, and water can be sent from the Ware River either west to Quabbin Reservoir or east toward West Boylston. This shaft is situated in part of White Valley (Smithville). It is near a former dam site which supplied water to the mills. The old canal beds which crisscrossed Route 122 can still be seen in the neatly landscaped lawns surrounding the stone structure over the shaft. This "shaft's elevation is 656 feet which is higher than either Quabbin or Wachusett Reservoir, so that water can be diverted in either direction." The Coldbrook-Wachusett part of the tunnel was completed and ready to deliver the first water in the spring of 1931.

The area upstream drained by the Ware River and tributaries became watershed, and only that area below the intake at Shaft 8 could be put to regular usage, thereby sparing South Barre and other villages on the Ware River. The Canesto River flows into the Burnshirt, which in turn joins the Ware River at the old Covered Bridge site in the eastern portion of Barre not far from the Hubbardston town line. Properties including homes, farms, mills, shops, and schools were razed, and much of the remaining land was planted with conifers. Much of the taxable property of Barre was removed from the tax rolls, and many of those families who resided or had businesses in the area were forced to vacate and live elsewhere. Photographs of most of these structures are on file at the Reservoir Engineering Office.

At annual Town Meetings in 1943 and 1945, Barre voters took action for the selectmen to post and take steps to abandon nineteen former town roads within the MDC watershed area in Barre.

The land in and around Barre Falls is now under the control of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who oversee and maintain the large flood control project constructed on the Ware River which was completed in 1957. Other portions of the watershed property in nearby Rutland have become a State Park. The Ware River watershed area, in general under the management of the Metropolitan District Commission, has become the playground of eastern Massachusetts. As one enters Barre by either Routes 62 or 122, one notes the large stretches of seemingly undeveloped and unimproved land. This was not always the case for one has only to explore any of these areas to find a cellar hole or a pair of stone steps hidden by undergrowth. Villages were removed from the map, including Coldbrook Springs a village on both sides of the Ware River and partly in Oakham and partly in Barre. The MDC Maintenance Building or Garage, a former mill building, is all that remains of the once thriving mill village of White Valley.

Today, motorcycles and trail bikes ride through what was once grassy and pine-covered trails. Snowmobile trails and signs mark the

countryside that once was field, school yard, and lawn. Hikers, cross-country skiers, horseback riders, and picnickers enjoy the numerous MDC roads, trails, and picnic grounds.



Store and Post Office, White Valley



Decorated Stage Coach 1920's



Interior of Jack's Popcorn

HISTORICAL SKETCHES



“WARNED OUT”

The term “Warned Out” may raise a question in many readers minds. It simply meant that those who showed no signs of support for themselves and their family members were given a warning that they must leave the community. Prior to 1800, the town of Barre “WARNED OUT” those persons who fell into this category. A special printed form was used sometimes, but often the work was written by hand. The warning was a legal means to rid the town of the cost of migrants. A “Warned Out” list was posted at an official location to notify those whose presence was not welcomed in the town!

The selectmen’s role, at this time, was one of many. They supervised the town affairs, administered the procedures of town government, became Overseers of the Poor, judged those that warranted being “bound out,” and sat in judgment of those who might warrant the distinction of being “warned out.” These men, as keepers of the “warned out” list, had to make decisions relative to the ability of the family to support and maintain their family members. It was also the selectmen’s duty to supervise those indigent persons and defend them from wrongs and injustices.

Since selectman were administrators of the “Warned Out” list, their records show details of several warnings. In April 1763, a warning was sent to a family head and ten members of his family including “a lad brought with him.” The warning was addressed to the constables for action. The family, since they had not “much visible” for their support, were “warned out” before they would become charges of the town. In one warning notice to the Overseers of the Poor in Paxton, it was reported that a former resident of that town “a poor indigent person now in a rapid declining state is entirely destitute of necessary means of immediate support and has become chargeable to the town of Barre.” The local overseer of Barre requested that they “remove him from said town of Barre without loss of time and remit to us our cost.” A female transient was “warned out for her not having received consent of the town, and that she was to depart the town limits within fifteen days.”

A "Warned Out" list that was dated 1794 contained the names of 216 individuals who, according to the town officials had no visible means of support. They thus received the distinction of being "Warned Out." Many of these people must have pleaded their cases and had apparently convinced the town fathers that they could become valuable assets to the town for several of those listed on the notice became office holders and respectable members of the community at a later time.

Besides the poor being "Warned Out," it was the custom that the poor were "sold off" or "bound out" at public auction. The lowest bidder at the auction received the responsibility for the proper care of those persons. In April 1794, an amount of \$100 was voted to cover the expense that year of the public auction. An auction was advertised for the 19th day of May in the year of 1794 at the Gates Tavern for the purpose of the "selling off" those who could not care for themselves.

The support of the poor was an item that was brought before the annual town meetings. The financial allocations for the support of the poor ranged from thirty pounds in 1766 to well over \$10,000 in 1932.

Indentured, or sold off, "Joel Oecum, an Indian male child" was bound out to James Rice, a prosperous farmer in the community in 1798. Joel was to serve as an apprentice to Rice until January 1814 when Joel would be twenty-one years of age. In the indenture that was drawn by the Overseers of the Poor for Joel, he was "to do no damage to his masters or mistress, shall not waste the goods of his master, shall not play cards, dice or other unlawful games...nor contract matrimony...and should behave himself as a good and faithful apprentice." The master had the responsibility for Joel's care. He "must teach him the art of husbandry, cause to be taught the English language and be taught to read, if capable thereof." The master was "to provide suitable boarding and apparel for such apprentice." As in many indentures, the master was required "to provide two suits of clothing to Joel and pay him the sum of fifty dollars at the end of his apprenticeship."

A young female child, in 1789, was apprenticed to Nathaniel Jennison. The covenant stated that she was to learn "the art or mystery of spinning and house keeping." She was to serve her masters faithfully, "their secrets keep... and she shall not haunt alehouses, taverns, or playhouses."

Another indenture, dated July 1790, was that of Patty Cheever, a poor child who was bound out to James Hamilton and his wife until Patty would be eighteen years of age in April 1800. Patty's indenture promised that she "shall keep the commandments lawful and honest" along with the usual rules contained in nearly all indentures. In return James Hamilton and his wife were to provide, "sufficient and wholesome meat and drink, lodging, and apparel nicest with two good suits for all parts of her body, one for the Lord's day and the other for working days."

The Overseers of the Poor gave advice and counsel, as shown in

September 1837 in a letter of admonition to one resident. He was declared "an idler, misspending his time. He had no place to even lay his head and was troublesome to his friends. He who will not work, shall not eat, and he that useth ardent spirits to excess shall not use them at all. We would, as friends advise you to be industrious and support yourself." He was further warned that if he did not mend his ways that he would be sent to the County House.



Town Farm, Barre, 1950s

In 1844, the town purchased the Nourse Farm on Town Farm Road. It was enlarged and adapted for the care of the needy. The farm was stocked, and a superintendent was hired. The infirmary was destroyed by fire in 1873, but the town rebuilt the almshouse. More acreage was acquired across the road. The number of local inmates had decreased. After several towns in the area closed their almshouses, many of their inmates became boarders at the Barre Town Farm. A charge was collected against the town from which the boarder came.

At Barre town meetings, the subject of the expense of supporting a town farm was discussed often. Numerous state regulations made it nearly impossible for the town to financially support the Town Farm. The local inmates had dwindled to one or two residents. Attempts were made to lessen the burden on the taxpayer. The Town Farm lots were offered for sale in 1951. Portions of property on both sides of the Worcester Road were sold to Veterans of World War I, II, and the Korean Wars. At that time, a lot on Valley Road was sold to VFW Post 404 for \$1.00 and cost.

The Town of Barre closed the doors of the infirmary in December 1966. That year there were no local inmates in the infirmary. There were five boarders. In 1967, a committee was appointed to study the disposal of the costly burden to the town. In June, at a special town meeting, it was voted to dispose of the personal property of the Town Farm by public auction. The auction was held, the buildings razed, and the land was retained by the town. The open fields have been leased to a local farmer.

By 1968, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts assumed the entire cost of public assistance to the poor. The local staff became the employees of the State of Massachusetts. Since that date the "Barre Town Report" has carried no Welfare Department budget to remind us of the many years the poor and indigent were "Warned Out," sold, or housed at the infirmary.

THE WINSLOWS: GOOD AND NOT

As a person researches his family tree, he is apt to find ancestors who fall into the unsavory category. A historian often comes across the annals of a family whose main claim to fame is the notoriety of one or more of its members.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, Zenas and Abigail Winslow and several children arrived in Barre. They settled in the village of Barre Plains. In 1782 Zenas Winslow was licensed to sell spirits in his tavern in Barre Plains. Four years later he was appointed as surveyor for the mapping of Barre Common. These maps bear his signature.

The Winslows' genealogy reported that fourteen children were born to Zenas and Abigail Winslow, but only seven are recorded in the baptismal record of the First Parish Church in 1791. According to Christopher Ross, a writer from New Jersey, in a letter to the Barre Historical Society, Zenas Winslow was a large man with a scar on his forehead which was the result of a bullet wound received at Bunker Hill. Colonel Winslow died in Barre in 1829, and his wife Abigail died in Petersham in 1839 at the age of 96.

According to Matthew Walker in a column of the 1897 "Souvenir Supplement" to the *Barre Gazette*, several of the Winslow family were far from respected by members of the community. Both Mark and Thomas Winslow were involved in the counterfeiting of money. An article in the *Barre Patriot* written in the 1840s states: "a box of one hundred and twenty-five dollars in counterfeit bills was discovered in the cellar walls of the Thomas Winslow residence and he was ordered to find bail in the sum of 1,000 dollars. He has for many years been suspected of dealing in counterfeit money, and has once or twice been arrested for the offense, but escaped for the want of evidence. The fami-

ly with which he is connected is not a little notorious in the annals of crime. His brother, Mark Winslow, was a noted counterfeiter and probably the most ingenious one known in the state."

Mark Winslow, the brother, had been sentenced to prison for life. While just beginning his incarceration, he committed suicide by cutting his own throat. He was interred in the family plot in the Lincoln Cemetery. Within a short time rumors spread that the burial had not been of Mark, but rather a waxen image to cover up the carelessness of guards who had let the prisoner escape. Dr. Joseph N. Bates, with a reliable but unnamed witness, disintered Mark. Dr. Bates made an incision with a scalpel. He found the corpse to be real, and they returned Mark to his place of rest thereby dispelling the rumors of Mark's alleged escape.

Thomas Winslow resided in the present Connington house at 250 James Street. If he served any time in prison, it was short-lived, for in 1844 he and his wife moved to Illinois where they both died in 1846. Another brother, Edward, had married Widow Tatman and lived in the Tatman house on the west side of the Common north of the savings bank. Edward was listed as a merchant. He operated a tanning yard on the brook behind his residence. He also was involved in counterfeiting. In 1814 he was given a surety bond of five thousand dollars for his personal appearance at the Supreme Court in Worcester, "to answer charges of having forged and counterfeit bills and passing same." Edward married three times. He died a pauper at the poor farm in 1855 at the age of 85 years.

It was a female member of this family who gained the greatest notoriety. Lucretia Winslow was one of the children born in Brewster who accompanied her parents to Barre. It is recorded that she was baptized at the First Parish Church in 1791. As a young woman she entered the teaching profession and secured a position in the town of Dennis where she taught in 1814 and 1815. About 1818 she married another educator, Dr. William Chapman. They eventually moved to Pine Street in Philadelphia. The Chapmans had four children, Mary, John, Lucretia, and Abby Anne. About 1828 they moved to Andulasia, a short distance up the Delaware River, where they opened a boarding school for young ladies.

One day a dark-complexioned stranger appeared at the Chapman door asking for directions as he had lost his way. He was invited into the house. Though short in stature, being only 5 feet 2 inches, he was charming and a gifted raconteur. Lucretia was fascinated with the twenty-one year-old stranger, who identified himself as Carolino Espos y Mina. He was coaxed to stay with the family despite the objections of Dr. Chapman.

Espos y Mina soon became a subject of gossip among the servants and family members. Neighbors reported "goings on" between the buxom, fortyish Lucretia and the house guest.

Five weeks after becoming part of the household, Espos y Mina pur-

chased a quarter pound of arsenic from a Philadelphia druggist. Dr. Chapman subsequently became ill and died a short time later.

Two weeks after the demise of Chapman, Lucretia and Espos y Mina were wed in New York with a friend of the groom acting as "justice of the peace." Then, instead of returning to Andulasia with his new bride, Espos y Mina went to visit "a sick friend" and for some time he found all sorts of excuses for continuous travel.

The disappearance of many items from the Chapman household as well as diminishing family funds caused the suspicions of the local police to be aroused. Enough evidence was gathered to warrant an exhumation of Chapman's body. An autopsy revealed arsenic poisoning and subsequent testimony revealed that it was administered to the victim in a bowl of chicken soup.

The lovers were charged with murder, and separate trials were set. Lucretia's defense centered on how gullible she had been and how she had been duped. The revelation at the trial was that the marrying justice had been an impostor. The marriage was illegal, much sympathy was elicited for the accused. Lucretia's ten year-old daughter, who was her namesake, testified at the trial. The jury found her not guilty.

Espos y Mina fared differently. He was found guilty and executed at Doylestown, Pennsylvania in June of 1832.

A resume of the case, which is titled the *Trial of L. Chapman*, was written by William E. DuBois and published in Philadelphia in 1830. In *The Annals of Murder*, which was completed by Thomas M. McDade in 1964, the author used the DuBois book extensively in referring to this particular murder. *The History of Bucks County*, written by H. Davis and published in 1876, also records this sordid tale.

DuBois reported that after her acquittal, Lucretia joined a troupe of traveling players who wandered through the South. She died a few years later.

Despite Lucretia's acquittal, it is interesting that on the flyleaf of a copy of the book, *The Trial of L. Chapman*, is a penciled message to the recipient from its donor dated 19 November 1834. In the stilted but graphic language of the time it says, in part: "At this moment I have before me a statement in one of the newspapers which we shall send you. The witch whose name is handed to posterity is the paramour and accomplice of the murderer of her husband and is now reduced to the position of a Strolling Player. How she has fallen! From revelling in luxury, keeping a carriage and enjoying the smiles of acquaintances, to be an outcast from Society, for degraded as her present occupation is, even there the finger of scorn is pointed at her...How Dangerous Are the Ways of the Wicked!"

One of the Chapman daughters, Mary, was sent to stay in Barre during her mother's trial. Christopher Ross, to whom we are indebted for this story, stated that Mary became mentally ill as a result of the family

ordeal and died in poverty in a neighboring state about 1847.

It is only proper that we mention that many members of this Winslow family were respected and useful citizens. Zenas Winslow, Jr. was a joiner or carpenter and was a member of the Barre School Committee in 1822. He married three times and with his third wife moved to the town of Wendell in 1892. Frances Winslow, a sister, married Thomas Green and at the time of Lucretia's trial was living in Syracuse, New York.

Lucy B. Winslow, a descendant of the same family, married George S. Allen. Hannah Winslow married Lyman Adams, which makes most of the present members of the Allen and Rice families relatives of the Winslows. These two families have produced numerous, outstanding, upright participants in the history of Barre.

A MOST USEFUL CITIZEN

On a knoll in Riverside Cemetery is a large unmarked boulder over the resting place of one of Barre's noted summer residents and according to Teddy Roosevelt "the most useful citizen of New York."

Jacob August Riis was born in Ribe, Denmark on May 3, 1849. He was one of a family of fourteen. He was apprenticed at an early age to be a carpenter, and he practiced this trade in Copenhagen before he came to America.

At the age of twenty-one, he came to the United States and landed in New York in 1870. He worked at many jobs before trying his hand as a reporter. Due to his desire to get the news, he found it expedient to spend much of his time in the slum district of New York City. What he found there shocked him. He used his ability to reveal the sordid life of the slums without appearing to be a reformer.

One of his objectives was to assist mentally ill and physically handicapped individuals who had no way to help themselves. He also wrote insistently on the need for open space for children to play.

He returned to Denmark in 1876 and married Elizabeth Nielsen who had been his childhood sweetheart.

When he returned to America in 1890, he published his book *How the Other Half Lives*, which was very well received and became popular reading. Teddy Roosevelt, who was then police commissioner of New York City, became interested in Riis' attempt to alleviate the degrading activities of slum life. Roosevelt drew up reforms that Riis had recommended, and a long friendship grew between the two men that lasted for many years.

Because of Riis' ideas, playgrounds were built, some of the undesirable sordid elements razed, and children's working conditions were improved.

Riis authored numerous books which all carried the same basic mes-

sage: *Children of the Poor* in 1892; *Making of an American* in 1901; *Theodore Roosevelt, the Citizen* in 1904; and *Children of the Tenement* in 1903, are but a few of his most famous.

After the death of his first wife, he remarried again in 1907 Miss Mary Phillips, who had served as his secretary for many years. They decided to buy a farm. After they looked at several farms, they chose the Frank H. Prentiss farm on Hubbardston Road, east of the Burnshirt River, which they named Crown Hill Farm. In his articles in *Craftsman and Worlds Work* in 1912 and 1913, he related the story of their selection of their farm and their becoming agriculturists.

In the local paper in May 1912, an item appeared: "Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Riis were guests at Hotel Barre...that they were stopping at their recently purchased farm which they would occupy during the summer months." The Riis's renovated the house, repaired existing buildings, and added a few more outbuildings after taking possession of the farm in January 1912. Keeping up two homes, one in New York and the farm in Barre, proved to be too expensive, so he sold his home in New York and took up legal residence in Massachusetts.

Riis continued to lecture and tour all through the United States, driving home his ideas of aid to those living in sordid slum areas of many American cities.

He suffered from heart trouble and was soon forced to lighten his schedule. The rugged winters of Barre caused them to live temporarily in New York City during winter months. He still kept up his lecture tours which proved to be a great strain on him. It was while he was on a tour in the Midwest that he was taken ill and was forced to spend some time recuperating in Michigan. Again he resumed his lecture tour, but collapsed in New Orleans. With the help of his wife and son, he made the trip back to his Barre farm but died on May 25, 1914. He was buried in the The Riverside Cemetery which he called "God's Acre," at that time visible from his farm. By his request, a granite field stone boulder from his farm was placed on his grave without inscription.

In 1974, as a memorial to Riis, the Barre Historical Commission had a marker erected outside the boundaries of Riverside Cemetery where he is interred.

Mr. and Mrs. Harrington of James Street, in an interview in 1961, related a most interesting story relating to Jacob Riis. Their story was that when Teddy Roosevelt was running for President in 1912 a small branch of the Bull Moose Society was formed in Barre to assist his candidacy. They invited Jacob Riis to speak at Williams Hall, and Mr. Harrington drew the lot of driving Mr. and Mrs. Riis to the affair. While driving up one of the steeper hills, the old Ford car stalled. Mrs. Riis jumped out of the car and placed a large stone behind the wheel since emergency brakes were not too dependable in those days. Mr.

Harrington got out the crank and gave it a whirl. The party resumed their passage to the meeting without further incident.

Mrs. Riis returned to New York after the death of her husband in 1914. She was active in a Wall Street brokerage house and attempted to retain the farm. Heavy financial demands on her income caused her to lose much of the land for nonpayment of taxes. The Town of Barre used one parcel as a gravel pit. It was subsequently claimed that this had been done illegally. A long correspondence by Mrs. Riis and her lawyer and prolonged litigation resulted in Mrs. Riis developing a sincere dislike for the Town of Barre.

In 1962 an article appeared in the *Barre Gazette* which stated that Mrs. Riis was still active in a Wall Street brokerage house in New York. She lived many decades after the death of her husband. She chose not to be buried in Barre.

THE PANTALETTE DOLL

BARRE GAZETTE -1936

HEADLINE READS: "DOLL in AUTHENTIC DRESS of 95 YEARS AGE (1840) BACK in HOME TOWN. Wearing apparel of doll was made by a small child in Barre and has been many years in the Metropolitan Library Museum in New York...now in Barre Library."

Many years ago a small girl, by the name of Agnes Eudora Dennis who lived on Valley Road in the house which was the home of the Dahart family, was given a doll which came to her by way of a lumbering stagecoach from Worcester.

Little Agnes Eudora named her doll "Minerva Ida Adams," after a friend of her mother, whom little Agnes Eudora greatly admired. This doll is one of the oldest types of American dolls, which is known as the "Patent-Headed" doll, and was made as early as President Madison's administration (1809-1817).

When Minerva came to Agnes Eudora, she had no clothes and wore only her white stockings and small patent leather slippers like those shoes worn by the children of that day. Agnes Eudora was not allowed to play with her doll until she had finished a complete wardrobe. Every stitch was to be perfect and sewn by her own small fingers. The completed outfit includes a chemise, nicely tucked; a flannel skirt; a white skirt; a morning wrapper of percale; a wool dress; and a "best black" silk with an embroidered fichu. The outfit was all finished exactly as if they had been real dresses to be worn by older people. Minerva still wears her original patent leather slippers.

The doll, because of its perfect condition and authentic period dress, has become of great value. It was presented to the Barre Library in the



Pantalette Doll

summer of 1936 by Miss Patten Beard. Miss Beard was given Minerva twenty years ago by Mrs. Albiathar Blanchard who was the little Agnes Eudora grown to womanhood. With the doll, Mrs. Blanchard wrote to Miss Beard:

“You love children and write books for them - please take this doll that was my own in childhood and write a book about her and keep her, for I cannot sell her, though many dealers have wanted to buy her. I love her still too much to take any money for her.”

In searching for an historic setting for this story, Miss Beard went to the Metropolitan Library Museum of New York City. The doll and a collection of toys which Mrs. Blanchard had given to Miss Beard were of great interest to the museum staff. These items were then donated to the museum and placed in the children’s classroom by the Metropolitan Museum. The room and contents became known as the *Eudora Collection*.

In 1936 the children’s classroom was disbanded. Miss Beard looked for a suitable place to send the doll. She thought of Barre, and so Minerva came back to the town where 95 years ago she had become the “dearest playmate” of a little Barre girl. She is now in a glass case on a table in the Library. The doll is an authentic, lovely record of the past

when a little girl was taught to sew by the means of a doll.

The *Eudora Collection* includes a set of toy doll dinner dishes, a doll's Bible, an English history, and two quaint picture books. A daguerreotype of Eudora at the age of five and several cuts of Minerva also came with the gift.

The Pantalette Doll which Miss Beard wrote is a fictitious story of Minerva and is with the doll in the Barre Library Museum.

QUORK WALKER

People of New England are wont to self-praise when discussing the events that led to the abolition of slavery in the United States. It is convenient for them to forget that the enlightenment of our region preceded the Emancipation Proclamation by less than a hundred years. It is of interest that Barre residents played a large role in the process.

All during colonial times it was common practice for farmers and businessmen to own slaves. Although there was no crop or economic endeavor that was as suited to the maintenance of a large number of black slaves as the cotton plantations of the Southern colonies, there were a few men in almost every community who owned one or more slaves.

About 1754, James Caldwell, who was farming in the Northwest Quarter of Rutland which is now Barre, purchased a black family composed of a young couple named Walker and at least one small child called Quork, for the sum of one hundred and sixty-eight pounds. James Caldwell died in 1763, and his widow Isabel continued to manage the farm. Six years later she married Nathaniel Jennison, Jr., of Barre, a farmer of some substance. As long as Isabel Caldwell was alive, no trouble within the family was apparent, but when she died in 1774 friction began.

Nathaniel Jennison, Jr., who inherited his wife Isabel's estate, was one of the children of Nathaniel and Abigail (Mead) Jennison. He did not remain a widower long, as he soon married Mehitable Shirley, widow of John Shirley of Roxbury. Mehitable, like her predecessor, had been left a sizeable inheritance by her husband.

Jennison owned and cultivated a large farm it is fairly certain. We know that he owned several slaves besides Quork Walker, whom he had "inherited" from his first wife, Isabel Caldwell. We can only conjecture about the actual location of the farm, but it is reputed to have been on Root Road.

According to Cushing in his article "The Cushing Court and the Abolition of Slavery in Massachusetts," trouble between Jennison and his brothers-in-law, Seth and John Caldwell, had been fermenting for years. After the death of Isabel, the Caldwells and Jennison were involved in several legal cases concerning promissory notes and debts.

When an opportunity presented itself, the Caldwell brothers sought out Quork Walker working in the fields and argued convincingly that he did not belong to Jennison. Quork had been James Caldwell's slave. His master was dead, and the brothers assured Quork that he could work anywhere he pleased. Quork considered the proposition and agreed with the brothers. He left the Jennison's ownership to work for John Caldwell. Jennison was quick to react and took measures to regain Quork. In the process he beat Quork.

Through the efforts of the Caldwells, Quork was removed from Jennison's charge. In 1781 a law suit was filed in which Quork Walker sued Jennison for assault and battery. Judge William Cushing presided. A jury handed down a decision which found that "the said Quork is a free man and not the proper Negro slave of the defendant." Quork was awarded fifty pounds in damages, and Jennison immediately appealed. The case gained some notoriety and it was 1783 before it was resolved. Quork Walker, under the aegis of the Caldwells, was represented at various times by Caleb Strong, a future governor of Massachusetts, and Levi Lincoln, who was destined to become the first Attorney General of the United States. Once again, Quork prevailed and a jury reached the verdict that "Quork is a free man and not the proper Negro slave." The result of this case was that legally "slavery was forever abolished in Massachusetts." It was rather a moral victory, as slavery did continue to exist in Massachusetts for some time despite the Quork Walker decision.

In 1783 Jennison disposed of his second wife's holdings of the land and buildings. He took the remainder of his slaves to Connecticut where he sold them. It is conceivable that this was a necessary action to pay the damages and court costs of the protracted litigation.

No record exists of Jennison's death, nor the location of his burial. His father was interred in Buckminster Yard in Barre. His mother, Abigail, was buried in the Adams Yard in Barre Plains.

Prior to 1805, Jennison's estate went into insolvency, and his effects were sold at "public vendue." Moses Holden of Barre was appointed administrator of his estate. The court granted his widow \$50 plus \$2.00 for his coffin and \$1.00 for digging his grave. Mehitable Shirley Jennison died in Boston in November 1818 at the age of 88 years.

By March 1787 Quork Walker had amassed enough money "to purchase for ten pounds from Francis Nurse a building and a quarter acre of land located on James Street" near the present site of St. Joseph's Parish Hall. Quork, being at least in his thirties, had married Elizabeth Harvey in 1786. At least five children were born to the couple. Quork died sometime prior to 1812, for in a deed from his heirs dated that year it refers to "Quork Walker, deceased." The exact date of his death, and the location of his grave are unknown.

The story of the "Barre Slave Case" logically should end here, but

there is an interesting footnote. Among the slaves sold by Jennison in 1783 was a young boy who was called Prince Walker and said to be a son or brother of Quork Walker. Where he was located and how he gained his freedom is uncertain, but he returned to Barre some years later and became a familiar figure in town doing various jobs for numerous residents. He married twice and lived on a parcel of land in the eastern part of town on a ridge of the Burnshirt Hills, northeast of the Larkin Rice residence and several hundred yards off the Hubbardston Road. The birth of eight children is recorded in Barre. Five members of the family are buried in a tiny plot near the crest of a rise on the side of a ravine opposite the homesite. Although deeded to the town in 1858, the yard is not maintained.



Prince Walker Burial Marker

A crude but durable culvert crosses the small brook in the dale, giving access to the plot where four field stone markers and a white granite stone inscribed "Prince Walker - at 84 - d. April 21, 1858" can be seen. The white stone, which is broken in several pieces, has been carefully set in concrete by a young man working toward Eagle Scout. Trail bikers often ride over a corner of the plot. Ancient trees lean dangerously near.

The sighing of the wind in the trees emphasizes the sadness of the scene, which is brightened briefly each spring by a profusion of marsh marigolds along the little brook.

THE NARAMORE TRAGEDY



House where the Naramore Tragedy occurred, Coldbrook to Hubbardston Road, Barre

A quarter of a mile north of Coldbrook Village on the gravel road that led to the Barre Falls, a farm house and barn once stood. This structure was on the east side of the road and was just over the line in Barre. The place was occupied by the Whiting and Babcock families for most of the nineteenth century. The carefully constructed stone walls that still exist on the property attest to the efforts expended to make this a worthwhile property.

The families who worked the farm never seemed to produce sons to continue the farm work. Despite adequate water with a small pond that fed a tiny rill and ample fields, the farm never prospered. Among the papers of Charles H. Follansby, a local businessman of the nineteenth century, are several chattel mortgages where Jonathan Babcock placed his oxen and wagons as collateral each spring to finance another year of planting and harvest.

The only occurrence of note that happened during the Babcock tenure at the farm happened when an itinerant tinker was invited to spend the night at the farm after he made repairs for the family. The tinker proceeded to shock his host by hanging himself in his room that night. Those who delve into the supernatural might attempt to make a case for an evil aura or a presence in the building because of the incident. No one at the time could foresee the terror of the event that was to come.

When Babcock died, the family sold the property to a lumberman who removed all the timber from the land while the house stood empty. In 1900 the property was rented to Frank Naramore, his wife, and six children.

Much of the information about the family has been drawn from the account of the Reverend Mr. Charles H. Talmage of the Congregational Church of Barre.

Mrs. Naramore was formerly Elizabeth Ann Craig, of Scottish descent, and hailed from a respectable family in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick. She and her sister were left motherless when Elizabeth was only three years of age. They were raised by their father. Elizabeth was described as a "virtuous and pretty young girl" who worked as a domestic for a family who operated a hotel in her home town. She moved to the United States and kept in contact with her aging father to whom she sent money regularly. She settled in Baldwinville where she was again employed as a domestic. In her spare time she learned the dressmaking trade, was able to rent a home, and took in boarders. Elizabeth was living a simple, comfortable life when she met Frank Naramore.

Naramore courted Elizabeth and they were soon wed. It was a match lamented by those who knew and liked the industrious young Canadian woman. The Naramores moved to Barre Plains where most of their six children were born. First came Ethel, a year later Walter, and in the next year Charles. Three years passed, and Chester was born and then Elizabeth. The last girl was named Lena B. Naramore. The family had grown by six children in eight years.

Frank was a drinking man, whose work record was inconsistent. When he worked at the steam mill, he wasted his earnings. While unemployed, he loafed even during the haying season when anyone who needed a few dollars could easily find work. Reverend Talmage described the man as a "despicable character" who possessed an "ugly and quarrelsome disposition." He was guilty of abusive treatment of his family. It was said that his children while at school sadly complained of their father's drinking problem. The young family, neglected by their father and in the throes of poverty was forced to move to the former Babcock farm. At that time the building was in very poor condition.

Once located in the new place of residence, Frank obtained a job at the Parker Mill. The community of Coldbrook offered the usual temptations of drink. The village of two railroad stations, two blacksmith shops, and a small church also had two hotels. Even though no licenses were issued to these hotels, liquor was amply available. During this period of time, a drunken brawl in one of these establishments resulted in the death of one of the participants.

Mrs. Naramore tried to keep a garden, raise a few chickens and pasture a cow to help sustain the family. The cow was sold without her knowledge. Most of the meager furnishings were converted to cash. To

provide heat for the home, she cut wood donated by the neighbors. The water for the household had to be lugged from an outside well.

Then the day arrived when the condition of the family had deteriorated to such an extent that the struggling mother was informed that her brood was to be taken from her and "farmed out" to various locations. The baby Lena would be allowed to accompany Elizabeth Naramore to her new abode which was the poorhouse in Holden.

That brisk March morning in 1901, there was no food to feed the family. Any produce from the small vegetable garden had long been expended. Frank had promised to get supplies for the family that day as he departed for work on foot. He did stop at the store in Coldbrook and ordered some staples for the family including flour and potatoes. The clerk had an unusually busy morning. It was past lunch time when he finally boxed the order. He asked the young Mr. Thrasher to deliver his goods, as he was on foot. Thrasher hitched the horse to the delivery wagon, and proceeded on the short drive to the Naramore house.

A few minutes later he pulled into the yard. No one greeted him. There was no sign of the children at the windows or door. Not a sound was to be heard. He mounted the steps of the porch and knocked on the door. There was no response. Repeated pounding had no results, so he moved to a window and peered into the house. What he saw sent him leaping to the seat of his wagon. The inside of the house was a horrible sight.

Racing at breakneck speed to the village, the clerk sounded the alarm that brought several people quickly to the Naramore home. Entering the house, they were appalled to find all six children, ages nine years old to six months, dead. They had all been killed with an ax. Mrs. Naramore was barely alive as she had cut both of her wrists and was bleeding to death. She was rushed to the Bemis Hotel in the nearby village. The mother was saved by the ministrations of Dr. Walcott of Barre. From the hotel she was transported to the State Lunatic Asylum in Worcester.

The civil and social responsibilities of the community were discussed in church sermons and in the town. There was a great deal of recrimination, and the two communities involved in the tragedy had the tendency to lay blame on each other. The Reverend Talmage showed considerable concern and held a public meeting in Williams Hall just a month after the tragedy. The purpose of the meeting was to tell the "truth about the Coldbrook tragedy" in which he to some extent exonerated Mrs. Naramore. The Reverend Talmage was also partially responsible for the state protection of mother's rights for the keeping of her children in such abusive families.

The obvious lack of concern displayed by the community for the Naramore children while they were alive was compounded by the lack of atonement for this neglect after their death. The funeral service was

held in the Baptist Church near the village of Coldbrook. The six children were buried in an unmarked, common grave within the walls of the Riverside Cemetery. The fact that those innocent children were buried outside the general burial area shows that the sympathy for the children was not considered.



A Stagecoach

STAGECOACH ERA

Personification of the stagecoach era in Barre was the colorful character Ginery Twichell.

Born in Athol in 1811, Ginery went to work for Josiah Stockwell on his farm in Phillipston near the border with Petersham and Templeton.

Mr. Stockwell ran an open carriage for the conveyance of passengers, mail and weekly newspapers from Worcester, through Holden, Rutland and Barre to Athol, making only two or three trips a week.

Pressed into service as a driver when he was nineteen, Ginery two years later bought the route, increased the runs to one a day to Barre and then to two or three times a day. He added several branches, to New Salem, Greenfield, Keene, New Hampshire, and Brattleboro, Vermont.

In ten years he owned two hundred horses. On his thirty-fifth birthday, Ginery married Theolotia Ruggles.

Ginery Twichell lived with a flair. The previous January, in sub-zero weather, he had ridden on horseback from Worcester to Hartford. Every ten miles he changed horses. He was carrying the news, dispatched from Boston, that Robert Peel had been elected Prime Minister of England. "The Oregon question" would be settled by correspondence. *The New York Tribune*, for which he rode, got the news by 10 o'clock at night. The rival *New York Herald* did not get the dispatch until four hours later. Ginery Twichell on horseback had out-distanced the train. A well known lithograph was made of his famous ride.

He once arranged to take sixty two young ladies, all dressed alike, on a blackberrying expedition. He provided eight perfectly matched horses to drive the stage.

When he became Assistant Superintendent of the Boston and Worcester Railroad in 1848, Ginery gave up his stage business. Two of his drivers, whom he called "Knights of the Whip," were Elliot Swan and Nathan Bemis. He was later president of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe; the Boston, Barre and Gardner; and the Hoosac Tunnel and Western railroads.

Ginery was a member of Congress for three terms, served as delegate to the convention that nominated Lincoln for President, and once during the Civil War, he went down the Potomac with fifty mail bags and vital messages within the range of Confederate guns.

He was president of Worcester West Agricultural Society and with great eclat drove the stagecoach carrying dignitaries to the Barre Fairs.

He and his first wife had seven children, only one of whom, a daughter, grew to maturity. His second wife, Catherine Burt, had only one daughter. Ginery Twichell died in 1883 at his house in Brookline, Massachusetts.

A large portrait of this vigorous and distinguished individual hangs in the Robert H. Allen Memorial Hall in the Woods Memorial Library.

Out of this colorful past rolls a handsome stagecoach, gift of the Barre Library Association many years ago to the Barre Historical Society. Standing nine feet tall, this great stagecoach has rear wheels five feet in diameter. Inside are seats for twelve passengers, with rose-patterned upholstery overhead and fringes at the window-tops. The springs are all leather. On the side is printed in bold letters, "Worcester, Paxton, Coldbrook, Barre, Petersham, Athol."

The carriage is maroon, badly checked from many coats of varnish. The wheels and under carriage are painted yellow with black and red stenciling. The overall length is 16 feet.

The coach was presented to Dr. Brown who used it to take his patients for many excursions into the countryside.

The venerable coach was always available to the town for parades and celebrations. When young couples got married the coach was often

called into action. The bride was "captured" and put inside, while the groom was made to sit up beside the coachman for several turns around the common.

Many years ago, Dr. George Brown presented the stagecoach to the Barre Library Association, which had it on display at the Princeton Antique Auto Museum.

When the Museum closed, the Library Association presented the coach to the Barre Historical Society. It came home to Barre and was stored in a metal barn for years until it was brought out into the light of day, dusted off, the leathers polished, and it rode majestically in the Barre Bicentennial parade. Charles Culver of Ashfield held the reins, his four handsome draft horses pulled and seven passengers were aboard, one being Susan Brown Luukko, granddaughter of Dr. Brown.

For another glimpse of the stagecoach era we have the reminiscences of Walter Richard Mooney, a bellboy at the Hotel Barre in 1904.

"One of my cherished duties at the Hotel Barre was to be in attendance when the stagecoach arrived. You could see in the distance the horses puffing as they were arriving over a hilly, dusty road. It was my pleasure to be there, get the luggage to be sent to the rooms allocated to each guest."

"The horses were given water to drink, and there was pleasure in the eyes of the many who greeted the horses with tidbits. It just seemed as though they belonged to each person there. No matter how many times you saw the stagecoach arriving it was like some new event each day in greeting." After all, in a town the size of Barre in those days, the excitement of getting mail and news from Worcester and other towns was an event all were interested in.

At that time in year 1904, horses were the dominant subject with most people in the various towns who had various events with their horses. Many knew the names and even the health of same, a subject to discuss. "Automobiles" were not in vogue at that time. Men needed their horses to help in their farm chores.

During the recent past the Barre Historical Society stagecoach has once again come into the limelight. When the society briefly considered selling the coach to realize needed funds, such an uproar resulted that it now seems certain that Barre will remain the home of this Concord Coach.



Palm Garden



Memorial Day 1915

MILITARY HISTORY



“In Service of their Country”

Inscription on Barre War Memorial in North Park, Barre

The history of any town is interrupted frequently by the influence of events of a larger scope. Events in the nation and world affect the ordered existence of each hamlet and town. Any war in which a nation engages alters the life of the town during the duration of the fighting.

At the time of the American Revolution, the settlement, while still part of Rutland (named Hutchinson in 1774), was well aware of the events transpiring in the Boston area. Sentiment ran high against the British rule. Since few people in the area had direct dealings with England, their opinions were not colored by economic ties. The few who remained Loyalists had strong feelings for the rights of the king and a sentimental attachment to the mother country.

A total of more than 270 men is credited to the town as serving in some branch of the colonial army. This number could be questioned on the basis of frequent duplications. It is obvious that a large percentage of the families were pro-Revolution. Barre was a little too far away to have presented a force at Lexington and Concord, but the town was represented at Bunker Hill. As the colonial forces dealt a stunning blow to the disciplined British army that marched courageously up the slope above Charlestown, a prominent role was played by Colonel William Buckminster, who had resided in Barre since 1757. A dynamic leader at 40, he was wounded during that charge and his health was permanently impaired.

For the first few years of the war, Barre men would volunteer in large numbers for limited service. A whole company would be sworn into the military under the guidance of a local officer such as Captain Benjamin Nye, Captain Benjamin Gates, or Captain William Henry; march to a threatened point; and return after the danger subsided. Such were the contingents under Colonel Buckminster and Captain Nathan Sparhawk who fought at Bunker Hill. Many of the men in the latter regiment were under the leadership of Captain John Black of Barre. After a limited service they returned home, and many of them petitioned for reimbursement for personal property lost in the withdrawal from the

heights. For example, Ebenezer Nye asked for money for the loss of a belt and his bayonet. The family of Josiah Bacon who was killed at Bunker Hill submitted a request for a "bounty coat or its equivalent in money."

When a British army pushed down through the Lake Champlain area in 1777 and threatened Vermont, a company of men was mustered in Barre and marched to Bennington in support of Stark's army. In the same manner a company trudged all the way to Rhode Island when Newport was occupied later in the same year.

The open rebellion gave the residents of the town the opportunity to shed the hated name of Hutchinson. A petition to the General Court which was sitting at Watertown had positive results. The name Hutchinson was changed at that time to Barre. For the rest of the long war, men from the town enlisted proudly from "Barre." It was a name that they respected because of Sir Isaac Barre's efforts on behalf of the colonists.

It soon became apparent that enlistments of some duration would be needed to gain independence. General Washington issued a call for men to enlist in the Continental Army for three years. Enlist they did. Barre men trod the unfamiliar ground of the Mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies as the main theater of operations shifted. Among the enlistees was Samuel Lee of Barre, who left for the war at the tender age of thirteen. Lee distinguished himself through the war years and beyond, eventually attaining the rank of general.

An interesting episode concerned a Barre resident, Henry Sibley, who was a veteran of several campaigns which included a march to Ticonderoga. Sibley enlisted as a Sergeant in a Massachusetts regiment of artillery for three years. When it became apparent that this organization was about to leave Boston and participate in action in other colonies, Sibley and several others signed a statement that they would not leave their home colony unless their pay was increased to a level commensurate with that of the artillery of the Continental Army. This was promptly labeled mutinous by their commanding officer. The signers found themselves confined in the Boston city jail. History does not record how these men regained the good graces of their officer, but they obviously did. Sibley is recorded as Quartermaster Sergeant of Lieutenant Colonel Paul Revere's Artillery in 1780.

The official roster of the Continental Army is dotted with familiar names: Gates, Nye, Sibley, Fessenden, Hawes, Smith, Gorham. Others served ably in a war characterized by the suffering of men who were poorly clothed and barely fed. That many of them survived to become respected members of the community is a testament to their rugged constitutions.

The only Barre men that we are aware of who served in the Mexican

War were Joseph B. Plummer and Daniel Ruggles. Both were graduates of West Point, Plummer in 1841, Ruggles in 1833. After graduating, neither returned to live in Barre. Both served in the Mexican War, and Plummer became a resident of Missouri, Ruggles of Virginia. Joseph Plummer died in the Civil War as a brigadier general. Daniel Ruggles was loyal to his adopted home state and became a brigadier general in the Confederate army.



Civil War Monument and The First World War Monument, Barre Town Common

The outbreak of the American Civil War brought a war unlike any other war. This war touched every town deeply. Because of the manner in which regiments were recruited, with whole companies often composed of men from the same town or even whole regiments from one city, a single encounter could be devastating to a small community. A single family often suffered multiple losses on one tragic day. It was not unusual to have father and son shoulder-to-shoulder advancing across an open field into the fire of artillery.

Barre had such a family with John Cobleigh and John Cobleigh, Jr., who were in the 34th Massachusetts Infantry. The 42nd Massachusetts Infantry had Barre brothers Benjamin, Elbridge, and Warner Bacon. Willard and William Fessenden and Levi and Forrest Hicks served together in the 53rd Massachusetts Infantry.

The war was less than a year old when the 21st Massachusetts Regiment of Infantry containing men from the five western counties of Massachusetts and thirty Barre men were involved in attacks on

Roanoke Island and Newbern, North Carolina. It was the first example of how a single engagement could affect the town when James Fessenden, Patrick Martin, and Joseph Stone all were killed.

The same organization produced the first heroic figure of Barre in the war. Henry C. Holbrook, a clerk, had joined the 21st the year before at the age of twenty. Having suffered an injury to his foot when a youth, he might not even be accepted into the armed forces today, but his abilities soon gained him a promotion to Quartermaster Sergeant. His coolness under fire led to his commission as Second Lieutenant on July 27, 1862. He was in a leadership position in an assault on a strategic bridge over Antietam Creek in Maryland on September 17, 1862. On that fateful day, more Americans fell dead or wounded than on any other single day in the history of this nation. Among them was Lt. Henry Holbrook.

There were also a score of men in the 34th Massachusetts Infantry from Barre who served almost exclusively in the Virginia area and whose one disastrous battle was at New Market, Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley. George Howe and Porter Robinson were killed outright, and a number of Barre residents were among the wounded at this 1864 battle. Assistant Surgeon Charles G. Allen distinguished himself by volunteering to stay with the wounded as the Federal troops retreated. Soon captured, he was detained in Libby Prison in Richmond where he toiled arduously to tend all the sick and wounded in that infamous place before he was exchanged.

Two other infantry regiments had a distinct Barre flavor. Company K of the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry had as its Second Lieutenant Jason Martin Gorham, a lawyer of Barre, who was a veteran of the 33rd Regiment. He commanded thirty local men. This regiment was sent to Louisiana, and although never in a major engagement, it served valuably and valiantly in a hot, unhealthy climate making many long and arduous forays into bayou country. The toll from sickness during the nine months service was high.

A whole regiment was recruited from Central Massachusetts in the fall of 1862 to serve just nine months. It was designated the 53rd Massachusetts Infantry. Company F was composed entirely of men from Barre and Petersham. Pliny Babbitt was the First Lieutenant and Charles G. Allen was a hospital steward. Very soon Allen was commissioned as Surgeon. They were transported to New Orleans on the ship "The Continental." Their goal was to capture the Confederate fortress of Port Hudson, Louisiana, which controlled the lower Mississippi, just as Vicksburg did further upstream.

It was a difficult campaign. The bayous and swamps harbored insects and diseases to which the Yankee invaders were not accustomed and many died of disease. Skirmishes took the lives of John Allen and William Hinchcliffe. Finally, they arrived at Port Hudson, and the Barre

soldiers spent the next few months digging and living in trenches through semitropical rains and scorching heat. David Robinson was wounded in his leg which was amputated. He did not have the strength to survive. On June 3rd, Walter Forbush was careless and did not observe the safety of the trench and became the victim of a Rebel sharpshooter.

On June 14, 1863 a concerted assault was made on the Confederate fortifications. The 53rd Massachusetts was in the forefront. They acquitted themselves bravely but unsuccessfully. It was a few days before news of the battle reached Barre. The town was gripped with grief. The dead included Elbridge Robinson, Joel Hodges, George Knight, Josiah Bliss, and Martin Johnson. Those who were wounded were Willard Fessenden, Henry Heald, Nelson Jameson, Patrick Rogers, and Lucius Spooner. On July 5th Port Hudson surrendered and soon the survivors of the 53rd regiment began their long trek home. Spooner survived and lived until 1936. He was the last Barre Civil War Veteran to die.



World War II and The Korean Monument, Barre Town Common

Not all men from the town served in the infantry. Several chose the artillery branch, which had the largest number, fourteen, enrolled in the 10th Battery of Massachusetts Light Artillery. This organization had seen considerable action, when on August 25, 1864 at Ream's Station near Petersburg, Virginia, they were overrun by the enemy. Many were killed, wounded, and captured. All cannons and 54 horses fell into

Confederate hands. Among the wounded and captured were Lyman W. Adams, Samuel Foster, and George Stetson of Barre.

Samuel Chamberlain from Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, commissioned a Colonel of the Cavalry, rose to command the vaunted 1st Massachusetts Cavalry. He also attained the rank of Brigadier General. After subsequent service in the West fighting Indians, he returned to his native state and was appointed first warden of the Charlestown prison. Upon retirement he bought a farm in Barre and assumed an active role in the town doing much research to produce a roster of town residents who served in the war.

Although figures vary, Barre probably had about 260 men in the service during the struggle of the Civil War of whom 59 made the ultimate sacrifice.

In all wars subsequent to the Civil War, recruitment practices were changed considerably. No longer were whole units composed of neighbors. No longer were certain skirmishes minor to the nation but devastating in the amount of losses to individual towns.

We are aware of only two Barre soldiers who served in the Spanish American War. In World War I, 211 men served and 13 died. World War II and the Korea War resulted in 18 deaths from the 540 who participated. Vietnam action claimed one life of the 139 who served.



Vietnam Era Memorial, North Park

RESOURCE MATERIALS

The primary resources for this book were the Barre Historical Society materials, the *Barre Gazette*, *Massachusetts Inventory of Towns and Cities*, *Chattel Mortgage Records* and the *Barre Town Records*. The research and writing was primarily done by Helen W. Connington, Albert Clark and Mary Kelley.

Additional materials used for this book came from: *History of Worcester County* Massachusetts (1889), *Quabbin* by Walter Clark, *A Memorial Edition of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Barre* published by the town (1875), *The Road Through Pirate Valley* by Julie Sherman (1931), *The History of Bucks County* by H. Davis, *Trial of L. Chapman* by William E. DuBois, *The Annals of Murder* by Thomas M. McDade, *History of North Brookfield* by Temple, *Gravestones of New England* by Harriett Merrifield Forbes and ie by B.A. Botkin. Some material was from articles written by Matthew Walker, a manuscript written by Edwin Woods at the Historical Society and a thesis entitled "Maggie" by Kate McMullan.

The 1794 map of the town is from Bill Milhomme, Massachusetts Archives. Some maps were from the *Topographical Atlas of the County of Worcester* by L.J. Richards and Co. (1889). The 1734-1875 map was drawn by S.D. Kendall, the 1992 map was drawn by Lori Stelmokas. The town maps of the Center Village (1782 and 1835) were drawn by Albert Clark.

Photo credits are primarily from the Barre Historical Society, recent town photos by Eugene Kennedy, Tay's Pond and the Smith Block are from the DiRuzza's, Dr. Brown's Institution are from Barbara Wells, Ginery Twichell is from Harold Patterson, Allen/Carter-Stevens Farm is from Audrey Stevens, the Rice Village Community School House is from Jinx Hastings and the Italian School is from Verna (Wheet) Wine Connington.

The Historical Commission encourages you to use the pages at the end of the book to record historical information about the town, dwellings, events or your family. Any additional historical information or corrections could be forwarded to the Barre Historical Commission.

INDEX

- Adams Cemetery, 62, 230-231
 Adams Corner, 162-163
 Adams, Austin F., 66, 231, 239, 242, 249
 Alden, Albert, 26, 34, 125, 139
 Allen, Charles G., II, 56, 86
 Allen, Charles G., III, 86
 Allen, Charles G., IV, 4, 86, 139
 Allen, Dr. Charles G., 46, 85, 278
 American Powder Company, 133
 Assemblies of God, 183-184
 Bailey, Alvin T., 160
 Baptist Church Society, 161
 Barre Cattle Show, 90
 Barre Central Cheese Company, 90
 Barre High School, 48, 96, 142, 199,
 202-204, 219, 224
 Barre Library Association, 54-55, 92,
 272-273
 Barre Patriot, 26, 28, 125-126, 132, 141,
 159, 258
 Barre Plains Union Chapel, 68, 175
 Barre Plains, 10, 17-18, 21, 54, 61-68, 74,
 85, 91, 108, 110, 112, 119, 129, 145-
 148, 151, 165, 175-177, 188-189, 191,
 210, 214, 230-232, 238, 240, 249, 258,
 266, 269
 Barre Powder Mills, 124
 Barre Reservoir, 4
 Barre Savings Bank, 24, 35-36, 114
 Barre Stage and Express, 41
 Barre Town Library, 54-56, 92, 272
 Barre Turnpike, 11
 Barre Wool Combing Company, 77-78, 172,
 175, 180, 209, 213
 Barre, Sir Isaac, 5-6, 20, 46, 51, 55, 276
 Bates, Anson, 11, 42, 158, 167
 Bemis, Charles, 123, 131, 165
 Bemis, Silas, 10, 119, 129, 131, 135, 236
 Bixby, Emerson, 94-95, 98
 Black, John, 8, 228, 236,
 Bogue, 78
 Borgatti, Anthony A., Jr., 56
 Boston and Albany R.R., 67
 Boston and Barre Manufacturing Co., 137
 Boston and Maine Railroad, 67, 149
 Brett, Silas H., 70, 134, 190
 Broad, Willard, 9, 15, 52, 81, 159, 167,
 193, 197
 Brown, Dr. George, 47, 55-56, 149, 169,
 197-198, 237, 272-273
 Brown, Dr. G. Percy, 198
 Brunswick Fox Club, 42, 65
 Bryant, Nahum F., 124-126, 140-141, 144
 Bryant, Walter A., 126
 Buckminster Yard, 230, 266
 Buckminster, Col. William, 87, 229, 275
 Bullard, E. W., 47
 Bullard, James, 58
 Burt, David, 81
 Caldwell Yard, 228, 236
 Caldwell, James, 7-8, 17, 155, 239,
 265-266
 Caldwell, John, 4-8, 153, 155, 182, 229,
 265-266
 Caldwell, William, 93, 182, 228
 Center School, 188, 203-208, 214, 218-219,
 223
 Charles G. Allen plant, 10, 17-18, 84-87,
 90-91, 97
 Chattel Mortgage, 105, 110, 122, 125,
 128-129, 141
 Christ Episcopal Church, 77, 172-175
 Clark, Benjamin, 10, 21, 24, 63, 112, 119,
 135, 167, 198
 Coldbrook Cemetery, 136, 235-236
 Colonnade, 25-26, 32, 114, 126, 141, 160
 Connington, Helen, 221, 250-251
 Cook's Canyon, 221, 246-248
 Covered Bridge, 10, 73, 162, 186, 235, 252
 Crossley, James E., 76
 Crossleyville, 75-76, 78, 189
 Dana, Rev. Josiah, 155, 157, 229
 Davis, James F., 34, 128, 248
 Denny, Edward, 10, 75, 144, 147
 Dennyville, 10, 70, 75, 78, 189
 District #17 Cemetery, 235
 District #4 Cemetery, 234
 District #9 Cemetery, 233

- Dr. Brown's Institution, 4, 195-198
 East Barre Falls, 10, 17, 69-72, 123, 134, 145-146
 Elm Hill School, 195, 197-198
 Evangelical Congregational Church, 158, 167-170
 Felton Tavern, 65
 Felton, Lansford B., 125
 Field, Spencer, 21, 24, 37
 First Baptist Society of Barre, 73, 161-165
 First Parish Church, 114, 125, 153-161, 167, 170, 193-194, 258-259
 Florence Hall, 77, 180, 183, 214
 Four Corners, 69, 91-92, 94-98, 233, 240
 Frink, Rev. Thomas, 226
 Garland, Mary, 177, 227
 Gaston's Pond, 19
 Gaston, Colonel William, 81, 152
 Glen Valley Cemetery, 90, 142, 227, 233, 237
 Gorham, Jason Martin, 31, 127, 278
 Great Brook Bridge, 8
 Green, Jeduthan, 186
 Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand, 59-60, 178, 242
 Harty Cemetery, 178, 240
 Harwood Crossing, 188, 233
 Harwood, Wilcut, 10, 165
 Hathaway Cemetery, 232
 Heald Village, 10, 71, 80, 84-87, 90-91
 Heald, Stephen, 81, 89-90, 126
 Hemenway, Willard Earle, 95
 Henry Woods School, 52, 204-205
 High Plains School, 68, 189, 209-211, 213-214, 219
 Hinkley, Joel, 170, 192
 Historical Society, 6, 13-14, 22, 24, 47, 58, 63, 85, 99, 112, 115-116, 134, 139-140, 142, 172, 202, 212, 221, 241, 258, 272-273
 Hobbs, Samuel M., 124, 130, 132
 Holbrook, Henry C., 278
 Holland, Sewall, 95
 Hotel Barre, 45-49, 51, 65, 151, 262, 273
 Hotel Brunswick, 67
 Houghton, Luke, 36, 117-118
 Houghton, Nathaniel, 11, 36, 81
 Hutchinson, 6, 182, 1, 276
 Improved Order of Red Men, 69
 Insight Meditation Society, 79, 82-83, 179
 Jack's Popcorn, 29, 254
 Jackson & Tenney Co., 123-124
 Jenkins Burial Ground, 232
 Jenkins, James W. Jr., 24-25, 124-126, 144
 Jennison, Jr., Nathaniel, 230-231, 239, 265-266
 Johnson, Alden, 143, 218
 Kendall Plain Cemetery, 228, 236
 Kendall Plain Yard, 229
 Killingly Farm, 80
 Kilner, Frederick, 21, 36
 King Yard, 232
 Knight, Luke L., 18, 86
 Leathers, James, 134
 Lee Cemetery, 230
 Lee, Charles, 8, 21, 24-25, 28-29, 35, 52, 113, 125, 231
 Lee, Samuel, 8, 11, 231, 276
 Lighthouse, 11, 24, 28-29
 Lincoln Yard, 159, 226-227
 Lyman E. Sibley, 25, 124
 Mary Martin Lecture and Concert Fund, 55
 Mason, John, 6, 155
 Massachusetts Central Railroad, 137, 145, 147
 Massasoit House, 22, 37, 40-42, 151, 221
 MDC, 18-19, 119, 130, 138, 165, 234-235, 239, 248, 250, 252-253
 Meeting House, 3-5, 7-9, 21, 25, 51-52, 79, 93, 126, 141, 153, 155, 157, 159, 162-163, 165-167, 172, 182, 186, 221, 226
 Methodist Church, 21, 25, 36, 163, 166, 170-172, 205
 Metropolitan District Commission, 18, 70, 72, 138, 164, 248-250, 252
 Mill Village, 84, 86, 138, 170, 186, 189, 252
 Mills, Richard, 93, 157
 Naquag, 2, 31-33, 41-44, 122, 127, 151, 178, 221, 229, 238
 Naramore, Frank., 269

- New Life Christian Center, 183-184
 Normal School, 52, 159, 192-195, 200, 202
 Northwest District of Rutland, 4, 153, 226
 Northwest Quarter, 3-4, 7-8, 17, 79, 103, 228, 265
 Nourse Tavern, 30-31, 33, 165
 Nutting, Wallace, 85
 Osgood Pond, 18
 Panaccione Brothers Sawmill, 87
 Pevear, Henry A., 152, 215-218
 Pierce, Ezekiel L., 88
 Pratt Yard, 232
 Pratt, Captain Seth, 232
 Prince Walker Burial Plot, 233
 Quabbin Regional Jr. -Sr. High School, 219-224
 Randall Yard, 240
 Revere Bell, 53, 161
 Rice, Jonas, 79
 Rice, Jotham, 79, 81
 Riis, Jacob, 152, 221, 235, 262
 Riverside Cemetery, 10, 235, 261-262, 271
 Roger Langley School, 189, 209, 213-214, 219
 Root, Frank, 55
 Roper, Alice, 106
 Ruggles Lane School, 182, 197, 208, 214, 218-219
 Ruggles Tavern, 42
 Ryder, Joseph, 86-87
 Ryder Village, 88
 Shays' Rebellion, 93, 104, 186, 233
 Shays, Daniel, 104, 156
 Sibley, Job, 162
 Sibley, Lyman, 43, 122
 Smith, Charles Worcester, 136
 Smith, J. Edwin, 128, 136, 145
 Smith, John, 136, 162, 236
 Smith, Moses, 92-93, 95, 97, 233
 South Barre Primary School, 209-212
 Sparhawk, Nathan, 5-6, 275
 Sparhawk, Noah, 226
 Spooner, Grover, 33-34
 St. Joseph's Cemetery, 178, 227, 237, 240, 247
 St. Joseph's Church, 59, 125, 177-179, 221
 St. Thomas a Becket Church, 77, 180-182
 Stetson Home, 143, 171, 215-218
 Tay's Pond, 14, 84
 Thompson, Charles Cotesworth P., 125, 139-140
 Thompson, Rev. James, 121, 158
 Town House, 11, 26, 28, 52-53, 80, 114, 123, 170, 186, 192, 194, 199-201, 203, 205
 Turley Publications, 143
 Twichell, Ginery, 12, 55, 124, 271-272
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 72, 252
 Unitarian Church, 15, 53, 159-160, 169, 196
 Universalist Society, 165-166
 Wadsworth Brickyard, 64
 Wadsworth Woolen Company, 74
 Wadsworth, David, 64
 Walker, Prince, 120, 233-234, 267
 Walker, Quork, 234, 239, 265-267
 Walworth, Arthur C., 152
 Ware River Railroad, 130, 145-147, 150, 163
 Weston, John Wheeler, 113, 227
 White Valley, 10, 17-18, 73, 123, 134-135, 137-138, 146, 189, 209, 252-253
 Wilbur, Dr. Hervy Bachus, 195
 Willard, Simon, 1-4, 238
 Willey, Sir Francis, 172-174
 Williams, A.G., 30, 37, 46-48, 95-96, 128, 248
 Wilson, Woodrow, 51, 108, 244
 Winship, Charles N., 152
 Winslow, Zenas, 62, 66, 187, 258, 261
 Woods Memorial Library, 54-56, 92, 272
 Woods, Harding P., 21, 24, 37, 63, 114, 131, 167
 Woods, Henry D., 55
 Worcester West Agricultural Society, 52, 108, 244, 272

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

